

Practical Discourses

Upon the most

Important Subjects ;

V I Z.

Of *Three Books* which teach
us the Knowledge of
God.

Of *Justice and Mercy* in
general.

Of *Mercy* in relieving the
Poor.

Of *Mercy* in Forgiving E-
nemies, and of Humility.

Of the Original of the
World.

Of the Original and Pedi-
gree of Man.

Of the Chief End and
Duty of Man.

Of God's Command,
and of an Universal
Repentance.

Of the Last Judgment.

Of the Three different
sorts of St. Paul's Au-
ditors.

Of the happy State of
them that die in the
Lord.

St. Paul's Confession of
Faith.

Of David's Triumphant
Hymn.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
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VOLUME II.

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DISCOURSE. I.

Of three Books which teach us the knowledge of God.

M I C A H VI. 8.

*He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is Good;
and what doth the Lord require of thee,
but to do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to
walk humbly with thy God?*

GOD in his first designation of Man for Happiness, made the attainment thereof so easie, that if he had but entred into a serious Consideration, and strict enquiry of his Duty, he needed not have gone farther than himself; because he had not only a liberty of Will to do, or not to do, what he was enjoyned to; but such lively draughts of the Divinity in his Soul, that nothing but a wilful and wretched carelesness could lead him out of the way to Glory, and Immortality:

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tality : For the bare contemplation of the frame of his Body, not to mention the wonderful and excellent compofure of his Soul, would neceffarily have led him to the knowledge of God ; and though God might have taken the advantage of the forfeiture of this his primitive Happinefs, becaufe of his wilful neglect , yet purfuant to his firft designs of Love and Kindnefs, he ceafes not to perfuade him to his Duty, and as a conſequent thereof to eternal Happinefs, by kinder and ſtranger methods than he was obliged to ; that is, by *Revelations*, and *Prophecys*, by *Miracles*, and *Benefits*, by *Deliverances* from Evil, and viſible *Inſtructers*, adding precept to precept, and line upon line : And at laſt condeſcending to enter into Diſputes and Arguments, that the Conviction being ſutable to Man's own way of reaſoning, nothing might be pretended by him for his farther obſtinacy ; and here particularly in this Chapter, he enters into a cloſe Arguing, in which we may obſerve the *Parties*, and the *Proceedings*, the Parties are three. Firſt, the *Plaintiff* God, Secondly, the Defendants *Iſrael*, Thirdly, the Judges *Mountains*, by a Rhetorical *proſopopeia*, Verſe the *firſt* and *ſecond* ; and in the proceedings we have three parts. Firſt, God's *Plea*, Secondly, *Iſrael's* Answer, Thirdly, God's *Replication*, God's Plea is a Plea of Debt, whereby they ſtood engaged to him for his benefits, Verſe 3,

4, 5. *I brought thee out of Egypt, gave thee Moses, Aron, and Miriam, and delivered thee from Balack; and Israel's Answer, Verse 6, 7. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* Which implies a confession of the *Debt*, and a tender of *Satisfaction*, and then *God's Replication* in the words of my Text, which takes away their answer, and declares what is that currant and acceptable satisfaction which the Lord requires, *He hath shewed thee, O Man, &c.* And here before I come to speak directly to my Text, I shall for our furtherance of applying what shall be discours'd of to our selves more particularly, shew you, how our case is *now* parallel, to what the *Israelites* case was then. For First, he sent *Moses* to deliver them from the tyranny of *Pharaoh*, and so he sent *Christ* to deliver us from the tyranny of *Sin*; Secondly, he freed them from *Egyptian Bondage*, but us from *Antichristian Slavery*, when the *Church of Rome* thought to have smothered the Truth in eternal Darkness; Thirdly, he gave them *Moses, Aron, and Miriam*, but he gave to us *Kings* to be our *Nursing Fathers*, and *Queens* to be our *Nursing Mothers*; Fourthly, he deliver'd them from *Balak* a false King, and *Balaam* a false Prophet, and us not only from foreign *Invaders*, but from a late domestick rebellious Usurper, and in some part from false *Prophets* too, both of *Rome* and our own *Nation*; and therefore we

have just cause to ask with the *Israelites*, *wherewith shall we come before thee?* Nay, rather may not God complain of us, that we have not only robbed him in his *Tithes* and *Offerings*, which was his usual complaint against *Israel*, but also in the Reverence, Worship, and Obedience that is due to him: For I fear we have as ready an excuse for robbing him in the *latter* (that is to say) it is troublesome to the *Flesh*, as we have for the *former*, (that is to say) there is too much given to the *Church*, and the overplus may be applyed to better uses; and thus to avoid a *Pleurisy* in Religion, we introduce a *Consumption*: in this respect it seems, the *Israelites* were rather *Superstitious*, than *Irreligious*; but all their Devotion was but external, and therefore God does implicitly tax their Hypocrisie, by telling them in this Text, what he requires from them; *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* In which words there are two parts, First, a *Proposition*, *He shewed thee, O Man, what is good*; Secondly an *Exposition*, *to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*: And first, of the *proposition* he hath shewed thee, *O Man*, which word *Man*, here must not be understood of the *outward* Man, or the *inward* Man, of the *old* Man, or the *new* Man, of the Man of *Sin*, or the Man of *God*, or the Man of *Be-lial*,

lial, or the Son of Man; because, here it points out not any one individual Person, but is taken collectively of all Mankind, and more especially in this place, for the *Church of God*: There are three Books wherein God has registred the knowledge of himself for our Learning. First, the Book of *Nature*, Secondly, the Book of the *Creatures*; and Thirdly, the Book of *Scriptures*: First, the Book of *Nature*. God has sown the Seed of Religion so in the Hearts of all the Sons of *Adam*, that though they may through their willfulness or carelessness, neglect to cherish or improve them, yet still they retain the Notion of a God, or of some superintendent Power, which is equivalent. And we find this to be so true, from our own experience, that rather than acknowledge no God, Men will set up several Gods, as their Superstition or deluded Fancy dictate to them. And that's the reason of the multiplicity of the Gods of the *Heathens*, who with the Men of *Athens*, will worship an unknown God, rather than none at all: and therefore it is a vain senseless conceit, that Religion is but Policy; I deny not indeed, but that particular Rites of Religion may be framed and instituted by the cunning of Men to delude the Simple, and to keep them in awe, and blind obedience to what they teach; and so might *Numa* impose his Laws upon the *Romans*, by the authority of the Goddess

Egeria, and *Mahomet* his *Alcoran* on the *Turks*, as a Revelation of the Archangel *Gabriel*. But this is most certain, that their artificial Inventions had never wrought so successfully on the minds of their seduced Followers, but that they were inclined to some *Religion*. And had the general Notion of *God*, and Goodness imprinted naturally in their Hearts, which is universal to all Nations upon the face of the Earth, and perpetual to all the Generations of the World; insomuch, that when our inward thoughts are not fixt upon *God*, yet in a sudden Extremity, or when some unexpected Good befalls us, we lift up our Hands and Eyes to Heaven, acknowledging by the very instinct of *Nature*, a *Deity* to whom we are obliged for all the Good we enjoy, and from whom we expect deliverance from Evil; and from this source, and natural apprehension of a Deity, (which *Tertullian* calls the first vesture of the Soul.) I say, from this ingrafted Notion, that there is a religious obligation due from Man to God, the diversified superstitious Worship of the Heathens did arise. And that which is more strange than all the rest, *Atheism* it self took occasion to plant it self in minds that are too violent, as the Poet has it, *Dum rapiunt malafata bonos ignoscite falso, Solicitor nullos esse putare deos*; but whence are these Passions occasioned, but from a strong apprehension of this ingrafted Truth, that *God* is the rewarder

warder of the Good, and the punisher of the Wicked; which acts of *God's* Providence, they erroneously limited to this frail and transitory Life. But if the notions of Religion be so general and natural, how comes it, that many have, and do oppose them? I answer, First, a Man may oppose that with his Mouth, which his Conscience at the same time tells him is true. And thus many a Man whose wicked life excludes him from all hopes of Heaven, instead of living so, as to escape that Punishment which he fears, makes it his business to deny that there is any such Punishment, which the secret twinges of his Conscience do's clearly confute.

Secondly, those things which are most natural, may be by continual dislemperature inverted; for we see that tho' nothing is more natural to Man than *Reason*, that being the specifical difference that distinguishes him from all other Creatures; yet some by either excess of Study, or continual Surfeiting and Debauchery become mere Sots, and depriv'd wholly of the use of Reason.

Thirdly, we must observe, that the Seminary where the Seeds of Natural Religion are sown is not the Head (where speculative Notions, as the principles of Arts are seated, and which in respect of the distance from the Heart, is privileg'd from those disturbed Passions, that might either divert our Intentions from beholding, or retract our Inclina-

tions from adhering to the truth;) but in the *Heart* and *Conscience*, where they are often suffocated, and for the most part eclips'd by those unruly Passions, vagrant Desires, and noisom Lusts, which both divert the Intention from beholding, and retract the Inclination from adhering to the Truth. For as the rays and beams of the Sun, shine more brightly in the lowest Region of the *Air*, than the highest, because of their Repercussion and Reflection from the Earth; but if the Air is darken'd with Clouds and foggy Mists, and Exhalations, they are scarcely, or not at all discern'd: So when the Mind is free from Passion, and in a sedate, even Temper, the moral and practical Notions of the Heart are more evident and conspicuous, than the abstracted Speculations of the Brain. But when it is discomposed with noisom Lusts, distempered Passions, and vagrant Desires, the rays of Divine Light are either partly, or wholly eclips'd and obscur'd; especially, when these come to be habituated in the Heart; that is, when the Soul is tinged with a Blackmoors die, and the Image of the *Devil* is superinduced on the defaced Image of *God*. To conclude therefore this point, dost thou desire to become a Child of *Light*, and not of *Darkness*? Dost thou covet to enjoy the beams of Divine *Light*? Art thou ambitious that thy Soul should behold these darlings and twinklings of the Divine *Images*, imprinted on her self?

self? Then endeavour to banish out of thy Heart these boundless Desires, these violent Passions, these libidinous Motions, these aspiring Ambitions, and these unchristian-like Revenges, and make it thy chief and special care, that these by Custom do not become habitual in thee. *Let not the Sun go down upon thy wrath, and pray with David, keep thy Servant from presumptuous Sins, least they get the Dominion over me:* and thus much of the first Book of Nature. Secondly, The Book of the Creature, Psal. 19. *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament shew his handywork. And Rom. 1. 20. For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead:* And Acts 14. 17. *Nevertheless he left not himself without Witness in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness.* Every Creature of God speaks to us with a double Voice, receive a blessing from God, perform thy Duty and Service to God that created these for thee. It was the judgment of a Philosopher, that if a Child were kept in a dark Cave, till he came to years of Discretion, and then brought forth to behold this goodly Fabrick of the *World*; that he would instantly believe that there is a *God*, and that all these things were created by him. We read that the famous Painter
Apelles

Apelles coming, as well unexpected, as unacquainted, to the Shop of *Protogenes*, drew a *Line* in his absence with such excellent Skill, that *Protogenes* at his return said, that *Apelles* was here. Let some simple Country Fellow look upon the admirable Structure of Man's Body, so amiable, and so majestick, and he must confess that no less than *God* could make it; but let a Scholar behold it, who can better discern the Symmetry and Proportion, the Complexion, Connection, Usefulness, and yet Subordination of the several Members; and he shall find *God* an hundred times in himself, and discover a world of wonders in a Worm of five or six foot long: If a Man should come into a Desert, where nothing is to be seen but Trees and wild Beasts, and there be surprized with the appearance of a stately Palace, he would conclude that the House did not make it self, nor the wild Beasts, but some skilful Artificer. And thus the Majestick Structure of the World, and its exquisite Harmony and Proportion does commend the infinite Power, and unspeakable wisdom of *God* its invisible Creator. We read of *St. Anthony* the Hermit, that when a Philosopher came into his Cell, and askt him for his Books, he answered, O *Philosopher*, the whole World is my Library; for whatever Good is eminent in any Creature, is infinitely in *God*, in whom as in the center of true Happiness, the per-

perfection of all the Creatures of the universal World do meet. And again, when we consider and contemplate that all the Creatures are created for Man, as the Sun to give him Light, the Air Breath, the Fire Heat, and Fish, Fowl, Fruit, and all other things that sustain Nature. It teaches us, that Man himself was not created for nothing, but for the service of *God*, that all this bounty conferred on him, might reflect upon him a double proportion of his Service and Praise; and thus far we may go in general by Nature, and the contemplation of the Creatures. But as he that has dim eyes cannot discern Colours, and as blind *Sampson* without his Guide could not find the Pillars of the House, so Nature without the direction of Grace, cannot lead us to any true saving knowledge of God. And therefore it is that the Prophet *David* having first (*Pf. 19.*) described the Book of the Creatures, he leaves that as insufficient, and proceeds to a third Book, Verse 7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, the Testimony of the Lord is pure, and giveth wisdom to the Simple.* And of this third Book, my Text is principally to be understood, *He hath shewed thee, O Man.* And now I come to speak of it, that is the Holy Scriptures, *Thy words saith David, is a Light to my Feeth, and a Lanthorn to my Paths. It is able to make us wise to Salvation. It is profitable, St. Paul tells you, to Teach, to Cor-*
rect,

Of three Books which teach us

rect, to Exhort, to Convince, that the Man of God may be perfect to every good work. They are able to beget true Faith in us, that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and in believing have everlasting Life. They are the Canon or Rule of our Faith, and therefore perfect; for a Rule can be no Rule, unless it be perfect: They are the last Will and Testament of the everlasting God: And as it is unlawful to add any thing to the Testament of a Mortal Man, so much more to the Will of God. They are the power of God unto Salvation; and therefore says our Saviour, *Ye do err, because ye know not the Scriptures, to the Law, and to the Testimony.* And if they speak not according to these, *It is, because there is no light in them; and they have Moses, and the Prophets, they need not one from the dead to inform them.* These are sufficient means to keep them from Hell; in a word, they are the Oracles of God, and the Key of his revealed Council, the Anchor of our Hope, and the evidence of our Blessedness: and tho' it be admitted, that there are some minute verities which the Spirit of God did not think fit to record, yet they are not necessary to Salvation to be believed; and therefore passing this by, I shall clearly prove unto you, that this very Book which we call the Holy Bible, is the undoubted Word of God, and the only rule of our Faith. First, because of its Antiquity being more Antient than

than the very Gods of the Heathens, as St. Austin proves in his Book *de Civitate Dei*. Secondly, because of their perfect Harmony, from which all other Authors are so far, that nothing is more usual amongst them, than to impugn one another, as if they were of the Blood of the Ottomans, who never think themselves safe, till they have cut their Brothers Throats. But here behold a sweet consent of so many living in sundry Ages, treating of several Subjects, upon different Occasions, like the Candles in the Levitical Temple, looking every one towards one another, and all towards the Stem; maintaining both a perfect Harmony among themselves, and a joint adherence to Christ Jesus their Head, as if they were not several Inditers, but several Pen-men of the same Holy Ghost: Thirdly, because of their Efficacy; for when the greatest Philosophers with so much Study, Learning and Eloquence, could scarcely gather together a few Disciples out of the Neighbouring Villages, behold a handful of Shepherds and Fishermen, draw the whole World after them. The Opinions of Pythagoras, Zeno, and Epicurus, vanish of a sudden, and the Heathen Deities forsake their Temples. *Excessere omnes aditis arisq; relictis Dii quibus imperium hoc steterat*, these do not persuade the World to a sensual Religion, as the Mahometan, if so, it had been no wonder to swim down the Stream; but
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to such a *Religion* as surmounts the *Understanding*, that teaches Men to deny their *Wills* and *Affections*, that crosses their secular Designs and Interests, and makes them forward to seal the truth thereof, with the last drop of their Blood. *Fourthly*, because of the *Sanctity* of their Matter, and Majesty of their Stile, you shall not find in them the fatal destiny of the *Stoicks*, nor the brutish Sensuality of the *Epicureans*, nor the *Pythagorical* Transmigration of Souls, nor the *Platonical* community of Women, nor the *Lacedemonian* Theft, nor *Spartan* Incest, no Adulterous *Jupiter*, no Spiteful *Juno*, no Bloody *Mars*, no Thievish *Mercury*, no Bastardly *Esculapius*, no Drunken *Bacchus*, no Prostitute *Venus* to be worshipt as Gods; but you may find a powerful plainness without *Affectation*, and such a mixture of *Majesty* and *Simplicity*, as shall squeeze tears from the eyes of the Reader, when the *Elegant Phrases*, *Elabroate Periods*, *Musical Cadencies*, and *Pathetical perswasions* of the rarest *Orator*, shall hardly touch your *Affections*; for here is such *Meeter* in the *Psalms*, such *Morality* in the *Proverbs*, *Philosophy* and *Astrology* in *Job*, and *Elegancy* surpassing *Tully* and *Demosthenes* in *Isaiab* and *St. Paul*, especially in the first Chapter of the *one*, and in the last seven Verses of the *8th* to the *Romans* in the *other*, that shews that the *Holy Ghost* could have used *Adjuments* and *Ornaments*

naments if it had pleas'd him. But if we consider the *Matter*, that is Sublime, above the pitch of Human Apprehension, particularly about the *fall* of *Man*, the Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, the *Love* we owe to *God* here, and the *Happiness* we shall enjoy hereafter, natural Reason never dreamt of these things; but the time will not allow me to press this at large. *Fourthly*, we may add to this the light of Prophetical Prediction, the Universal *Deluge*, the Captivity of *Babylon*, the four *Monarchies*, the Incarnation and Passion of our *Saviour*, *Josiah* named *1 Kings* 13. 2. long before he was born: and so is *Cyrus*, *Isa.* 44. 28. this was far from the blind and ambiguous *Oracles* of the *Heathens*, and could not proceed, but from the *God* of Heaven. *Sixthly*, It appears to be the *Word* of *God*, by the Testimony of the Blessed *Martyrs*, so many, that as *St. Hierom* has it in his Epistle to *Eromatius*, there was not that day in the year, wherein *five Thousand* did not seal the Truth thereof with their *Blood*, except the Calends of *January*; at which time the *Pagans* were so taken up with their heathenish Banquets and Solemnities, that they had not leisure to slaughter the poor *Christians*. And *Lastly*, it appears to be the Word of *God*, from those many Miracles wherewith this sacred Truth has bin confirmed, the Simplicity and Modesty of the Pen-men, not instructed in the *Schools*,
nor

nor trained up in the *Arts*; not hunting after *Vain-Glory*, not sparing to divulge their own, and their Ancestors Faults and Infirmities; nay, from those Judgments of God that fell upon those *Tyrants* and *Hereticks*, that attempted to suppress or profane those *Sacred Oracles*, and from the Ministerial Authority of the *Church* for many succeeding *Ages*. And above all these, from the Heavenly *Light* that shines in the *Scriptures*, to all those that with *Devotion* pray, and with *Humility* read them, which alone, by God's Grace, does beget an infallible certainty of *Experience*, rather, than of *Speculation*. We have also a more sure word of *Prophecy*, which you would do well to take heed to, a *Light* that shines in *Darkness*, says St. Peter: Thus as the Prince of *Darkness* was thrown down from *Heaven*, so our *Illumination* comes down from *Heaven*, from God the *Father*, who is the *Father of Light*, from God the *Son*, who is the *Light of the World*, and from God the *Holy Ghost*, who is the *Light of our Hearts*. And thus I have dispatcht the first particular in the Text, namely the *Proposition*, *He hath shewed thee, O Man*, wherein I told you of three Books, the Book of *Nature*, the Book of the *Creatures*, and the Book of the *Scriptures*. I told you also, how that these very *Scriptures* which we call the *Bible*, are the undoubted Word of God. I should now treat of the second
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Particular in the Text, that is, the *Exposition* in these words, *to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*; but this I design for the Subject of another Day, and therefore I shall spend the remainder of the time in making Application of what I have deliver'd.

First, Then since God has used so many ways to instruct us in our Duties, let us be sure to be good Proficients therein; and being that now especially, He has given us the Holy Scriptures, for a clearer revealer of Himself, and his Will, let us not plead *ignorance* for our Omissions. But consider that dreadful Sentence, that, *He that knows his Master's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*. *Secondly*, Since the Scriptures are the Key of God's revealed Counsels, wherein he hath shew'd us *what is good, and what the Lord requireth of us*. Let us from hence learn two things, *First*, the *dimness* and incapacity of Nature, to discern the Mysteries of Religion, as we may see in *Naaman*, and *Nicodemus*; and *Secondly*, to captivate our Reason to the obedience of *Christ*, and not to be too inquisitive of what God has not revealed unto us, but to do our Duties in what God has commanded us, without too curious an enquiry after the event of it; for we *Christians* ought not to receive the Doctrines of the Church with Human Reason only, but with Divine Faith. And there-
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nor trained up in the *Arts*; not hunting after *Vain-Glory*, not sparing to divulge their own, and their Ancestors Faults and Infirmities; nay, from those Judgments of God that fell upon those *Tyrants* and *Hereticks*, that attempted to suppress or profane those *Sacred Oracles*, and from the Ministerial Authority of the *Church* for many succeeding *Ages*. And above all these, from the Heavenly *Light* that shines in the *Scriptures*, to all those that with *Devotion* pray, and with *Humility* read them, which alone, by God's Grace, does beget an infallible certainty of *Experience*, rather, than of *Speculation*. We have also a more sure word of *Prophecy*, which you would do well to take heed to, a *Light* that shines in *Darkness*, says *St. Peter*: Thus as the Prince of *Darkness* was thrown down from *Heaven*, so our *Illumination* comes down from *Heaven*, from God the *Father*, who is the *Father of Light*, from God the *Son*, who is the *Light of the World*, and from God the *Holy Ghost*, who is the *Light of our Hearts*. And thus I have dispatcht the first particular in the Text, namely the *Proposition*, *He hath shewed thee, O Man*, wherein I told you of three Books, the Book of *Nature*, the Book of the *Creatures*, and the Book of the *Scriptures*. I told you also, how that these very *Scriptures* which we call the *Bible*, are the undoubted Word of *God*. I should now treat of the second
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Particular in the Text, that is, the *Exposition* in these words, *to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*; but this I design for the Subject of another Day, and therefore I shall spend the remainder of the time in making Application of what I have deliver'd.

First, Then since God has used so many ways to instruct us in our Duties, let us be sure to be good Proficients therein; and being that now especially, He has given us the Holy Scriptures, for a clearer revealer of Himself, and his Will, let us not plead *ignorance* for our Omissions. But consider that dreadful Sentence, that, *He that knows his Master's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*. *Secondly*, Since the Scriptures are the Key of God's revealed Counsels, wherein he hath shew'd us *what is good, and what the Lord requireth of us*! Let us from hence learn two things, *First*, the *dimness* and incapacity of Nature, to discern the Mysteries of Religion, as we may see in *Naaman*, and *Nicodemus*; and *Secondly*, to captivate our Reason to the obedience of *Christ*, and not to be too inquisitive of what God has not revealed unto us, but to do our Duties in what God has commanded us, without too curious an enquiry after the event of it; for we *Christians* ought not to receive the Doctrines of the Church with Human Reason only, but with Divine Faith. And there-
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fore it was, that the *Egyptians* used to place a *Sphinx* before the door of their Churches, to shew the unsearchableness of *God's* Judgments, and that his ways are past finding out, *Rom. 11. 33.* And the *Pagans* used to paint their *God Silence* in their Churches, standing like a *Fool*, with his finger on his Mouth, to teach us not to be too inquisitive into the Secrets of *God*; for it is as easie for a *Child* to empty the Ocean with a Cockle-shel, or to blow out the Sun with a pair of Bellows, as for the greatest Wit, and profoundest Judgment of the wisest Man in the World, to find out the Mysteries of *God*. *Thirdly*, Since the *Scriptures* are the best, and the only way now left us, to attain to the knowledge of *God*, we are taught from hence, not to expect in these days with the vertiginous *Enthusiasts*, a *Cloven Tongue*, or a new Revelation from *Heaven*; these indeed were those *Missilia* or *Medals*, which the King of *Glory* did disperse in the day of his Inauguration. But now we must have our recourse both for our direction and practice to the *Law*, and to the *Prophets*, For he hath shewed thee, O *Man*. And therefore let us pray to the *Father of Light*, that he would illuminate us by his *Spirit*, and dispel the darkness of our Minds, That in his *Light*, we might see *Light*. Let us from hence learn to reverence the word of *God*, and make use of it; and with thankfulness, own what an inestimable blessing

sing it is to us, to have so perfect a *Rule* to walk by; for the *Devil* did easily insinuate himself into the *Church*, until it was defended by the *Scriptures*, as it appears by this; that (in the judgment of the Learned) those very places in which the *Schools* of the *Patriarchs* were for *Catechising* and *Instructing* their Families, afterwards became the *Seats* of his blasphemous *Oracles*: and therefore says *Origen*, God taking pity on Mankind, did deliver his word in Writing, that the truth might be the better preserv'd, and more easily secur'd from Corruption. In other Writings many things are Erroneous, but there is no such danger in the *Scripture*; for *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of it shall be lost*: In other Authors we find many things *Superfluous*, but here nothing *needless* or wanting; for here we have *Commandments* written, that we may obey them, the *Catholick Faith* is recorded, that we may believe it. *These things are written, says St. John*, that ye might believe that *Jesus* is that *Christ*, and believing might have everlasting life. Here we have *God's Mercies* registred to draw and allure us, and *God's Judgments* to frighten us from *Sin*: Good examples to lead us, bad examples to shew us our Danger, *Parables* to teach us Wisdom. The joys of Heaven to encourage us, and the pains of Hell to frighten us from Sin. Thus whatever is written, is

Of three Books which teach us

written for our Learning. Art thou a Babe? why, here is the *sincere Milk of the word*, to fit thee for stronger Meat. Art thou a strong Man in *Christ*? why, here are Mysteries, and high points to entertain thee. Art thou Ignorant, here thou may'st learn Knowledge. If you are already Wise, here you may encrease in *Wisdom*. Parent, Child, Prince, Subject, Preacher, Hearer, Master, Servant, Husband and Wife, here may learn their respective Duties. Art thou Sick, here is Health that never fadeth: Art thou Poor, here are Riches that never fail: Art thou Thirsty, here is Water that floweth to *Eternal Life*: Art thou Hungry, here is *Bread that came down from Heaven*, whereof he that eateth shall never Hunger. Dost thou wander in a Labyrinth of Errors, here you have an *Ariadne's* clue to guide thee out of it. Art thou tost upon the Waves of this troublesom World, and in danger of being split against the Rocks and Sands of Error and Heresies? they are a certain compass to guide you to the Haven of Peace and Happiness. Art thou troubled with Temptations, they are the Sword of the Spirit, *for ever it is written*, is as an Arrow to shoot against the *Devil*, which if it be shot with Faith, never misses him. Blessed is he that has his Quiver full of them; in a word, the *Scripture* are the poor Man's *Riches*, the rich Man's *Glory*, the weak Man's *Strength*, the sick

sick Man's *Health*, and the dead Man's *Life*: Wherefore though others may vilifie them, and call them a nose of *Wax*, and the *black Gospel*, and say with Cardinal Cajetan, *Melius consultum fuisset ecclesiæ si Scripturæ non extitissent*, That is, it were better for the Church that there were no Scripture; but let us reverence them, as the power of God unto Salvation, and be as intent in the study of them, as *Aristotle* was on his *Philosophy* with his *Ball and Basen*, and as *Archimedes* on his *Lines*. Let us call for them, as *St. Cyprian* did for *Tertullian*, *Da mihi Magistrum*, give me my Master: And that day we learn nothing out of it, say with *Titus*, *diem perdidit*, I have lost the day. Fifthly, As we are bound to admire the goodness of God, and particular Mercy unto us, in that he has vouchsafed to us the Holy Scriptures, which he deny'd to others, that deserv'd not so ill as we: So we must be sure not to make this use of them, that is, to get them without Book, and to understand their literal Meaning, only to furnish us with Chat and Prattle, to get the Reputation of being great Clerks, as the *Rabbies* amongst the *Jews*: But to reform our Lives, to practise all those Graces and Virtues that are discovered in them; to learn Charity, and Humility, Sobriety, and Temperance, to despise the World, and to be content with all Conditions, freely acquiescing, without re-

pinning in the Will of of God. And as I fear there is not any one of us, but has neglected too much to make this use of the *Scriptures*; so my earnest request is, that for the future, such would endeavour to recover what they have neglected or mis spent. And as a Motive thereunto, let us consider with our selves, what answer we should make to the great *God* of Heaven and Earth at the day of Judgment, when he shall lay before us all the pains and charges he was at, in instructing us in the ways he would have us walk in, and yet would not observe it. And instead of being thankful for all the tenderness wherewith he has treated us, we have neglected his *Precepts*, despised his *Laws*, and regarded not his *Threats*, but grieved his *Holy Spirit*, which is still striving to work us into some Goodness. And do not consider that Blessedness is not affixt to knowing, but to doing, *for blessed are ye if ye do these things*. Certainly if we seriously reflected upon this, we would not rest in an outward knowledge and reading of the *Scriptures*; but we would do all that might entitle us to that blessedness tender'd in them: And upon that account, be more diligent and punctual in our Duties, more zealous in our Devotions, and more fervent and frequent in our Prayers; and when we come to this Holy place, resolve to mend our lives more by the Sermon, than to please our Fancies, or gratifie

gratifie our Ears with what we hear. And now we have more need than ever to be thus careful, because we live in an Age that has plac'd all *Religion* in *Speculation*, and little or none in *Practice*, that reads the *Scripture* and remembers it too; but it is to make it the subject of their *scurrilous* Wit, or to furnish them with colourable excuses for their leud and sinful Practices. And Men are now adays so backwards in works of *Mercy* and *Piety*, that as if it were in opposition to the humour of the Primitive Christians, they have more need of new fires to be kindled in them, than of any Considerations to allay their forwardness: For there is little or no zeal now, but the zeal of *Envy* and *Uncharitableness*, killing the good name of as many as they can, and damning more by Censures, than they endeavour to reclaim by their good Examples. God grant we may be as careful in repenting of what we are guilty of in this kind, as we are quick-sighted in seeing it in others; if we be, I doubt not but we shall reap the Advantages that follow the doing of Justice, and loving Mercy and walking humbly with God, which I intend by his Assistance to treat of the next Sunday: And in the mean while to God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

Of Justice and Mercy in General.

M I C H VI. 8.

*He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is Good,
and what doth the Lord require of thee, but
to do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk
humbly with thy God?*

THE last Sunday I entred upon these words, which (to omit all other Repetition) I told you contain'd two Parts, a *Proposition*, and an *Exposition*. I then discours'd of the *Proposition*, and now I intend to speak of the *Exposition* in these words, *To do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Which are three main Fundamentals of our Christian Religion, and so necessary to *Salvation*, that without not only the *Believing*, but the *Practising* of them, it cannot be by any other means attain'd to: but before I come to speak of the *first* of these,

these, to do *Justly*, which I design for the Subject of this days Discourse, I shall interpose this Consideration, which I omitted the last Sunday, from the words, *He hath shewed thee, O Man*; and that is, to shew how the *Prophet* to press it home to every particular Person, says *then, O Man*: Whence we may observe, that particular *Application* to the Person, Place, and Time, gives Life and Efficacy to general Instructions; for *David* heard *Nathan's* Parable gladly, till he came to, *thou art the Man*; which shews, that we neither Teach, Hear, nor Believe aright, without particular Application; for *tho' whatever is written is for our Learning*, yet if we do not apply it to our selves, we shall reap no benefit by our bare believing, because the *Devils* themselves do as much; for they believe there is a *God*, a *Jesus*, an *Holy Ghost*, a *Catholick Church*, a *Remission of Sins*, and a *Resurrection from the Dead*: But the *Christian* must go farther than this, for he must believe that this *God*, is his *God*, this *Jesus* his Saviour, this *Holy Ghost* his Sanctifier; that he has an interest in the *Remission of Sins*, and shall have a share in the *Resurrection* of the *Just*. For as it is neither the sight nor discourse of Meat, but eating of it, that satisfies a Man's Appetite, and nourishes his Body; so it is not a *Speculative Knowledge*, nor a bare *Attention* in hearing, but particular application and digestion of Sacred Truths,

Truths, that nourishes the Soul : This is the end of the Blessed Sacrament, to represent, convey, and apply to each Man in particular, general Truths, Divine Ordinances, and the Universal Merits of *Christ* : For tho' no particular Man is named in Holy *Scripture*, yet as upon a general Proclamation, every particular *Subject* is inclined, and bound to give Obedience : So every *Christian* is comprehended in general in the *Scriptures*, and therefore ought to apply it to himself, as being particularly intended by it; *stand therefore, says the Apostle, having your Loins girt about with Truth*, particularly Application is the Girdle, and he that is ungirt with this, (I may truly say) is unblest, the *Scripture* says, *whose Sins ye remit, are remitted*. By vertue of this Commission, the Minister do's not stick to absolve particular Persons; and *Christ* says, *Whosoever believes, and is Baptized, shall be saved* : Which words, do command me and you to assume and infer, but I Believe, and am Baptiz'd, and therefore I shall be saved; and therefore the Text says, he has *shewed thee, O Man, to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*? And here, before I come to speak directly of Justice, It will not be impertinent to enquire, why *God* seems to prefer *Justice* (by their order in the Text) before *Mercy* and *Piety*. I answer for two Reasons, *First*, to unmask *Hypocrisie*; for the sincerity of Men's
Hearts

Hearts and Actions, are better discovered by acts of *Justice*, than of *Mercy*; because that as the former must abridge a Man in his particular Gain or Advantage, or else discover his *Injustice*, so the other two, that is, *Mercy* and *Piety*, may be so cunningly counterfeited by him, that none but *God* only, can discern the Truth and Sincerity of them; for *Absolon* intending Treason, pretends a Vow, and *Judas* projecting his private Gain, cloaks it with a care of the Poor; and *Herod* under the colour of worshipping *Jesus*, would have murdered him; and *Demetrius* pretends Devotion to *Diana*, but intends his own Trade; but thou shalt know them by their Fruit, as the *Physitian* knows the Condition of his Patient by the beating of his Pulse. So a Man may discern a just Man by his Works, *Isa.* 74. *Frust not in lying words, saying, the Temple of the Lord, while you do not truly execute Judgment between a Man and his Neighbour*; and *Jeremy* 1. 13. *Bring no Man Oblations*, which shews, that none can be *Pious* to *God*, that is not *Just* to *Man*: Secondly, *God* prefers *Justice* to *Mercy* and *Piety*, to shew that he is more sensible of the wrong done to his *Servants*, than of what is done to himself; for *Christ*, that was patient at his own Sufferings, could not endure the Injuries done to his *Servants*; and therefore to save them, he strikes down a *Saul*, and by a Miracle, turns him from a
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Persecutor into a *Saint*, as if the Injury done to them, toucht him more nearly, than what was done to himself : And the reason is, because of the Mystical Union between *Christ* and his *Church*, whereof he is Head, and therefore thinks himself oblig'd to defend it. *Secondly*, It may be demanded, why the *Prophet* bids us to do *Justice*, before to *love Mercy*? I Answer, because that Goods gotten unjustly, are not fit Subjects for works of Mercy and Charity towards *Men*, nor of Piety towards *God*; for we must not think to commute for the punishments due for the Injustice and Wrong we do, by being Merciful and Charitable to others. It will not excuse us for starving of many Families, by unjust robbing them of their Maintenance, to rescue others from Want and Necessity, with what we ravish from them : This is like robbing of *Peter*, to pay *Paul*, and demolishing of a *Church*, to build an *Hospital*. *Fourthly*, The *Prophet* places *Justice* first, because in a general Sense it comprehends all Vertues, though more especially it denotes, that Vertue that is conversant about *Mine* and *Thine*; and hence it is, that in *Scripture*, the Rewards of all other Vertues are promis'd to it; as the Resurrection of *Life*, is called the Resurrection of the *Just*, and eternal *Happiness* it self, is called the Crown of *Justice*. *Lastly*, Because that *Repentance* alone, is sufficient for the Expiation of the

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Violation of all other Vertues; but the Violation of *Justice*, requires as well *Restitution* to Man, as *Repentance* to God. And therefore it was that *Zacheus* said, *If I have wronged any Man, I give him four-fold*. And he rests not there, but because in his Dealings, he might have injur'd more than he remembered; he adds, *I give half my Goods to the Poor*, and immediately thereupon our Saviour tells him, *Salvation is come this day to this House*. And thus having cleared my passage to the Text, I shall now speak more directly of it, to do *Justly*, in treating of which, I shall not trouble you with the several Definitions of the *Schools*, nor the many nice Distinctions they have about *Jus* and *Rectum*; because I design to speak what may tend more to your *Practice*, than to your *Speculation*. Therefore I shall tell you in general, that *Justice* is as *Tully* says, not what Opinion, or debauched Reason may call so; but it is a *Natural Instinct of right Reason*, which directs a Man to do unto another, as he would be done unto; or it is a constant and serious endeavour of giving every Man what is Right, and he that does this, shall easily perform what is required of him: And this *Justice* is Twofold, Publick and Private, publick *Justice* is employed about the common and general good of all, private *Justice* is employed about the Conservation of, and encreasing the private good of particular

lar Persons: As those two Meteors, *Castor* and *Pollux*, appearing both together, comfort Seafaring Men with hopes of fair Weather and of a prosperous Voyage, but appearing singly portend a Storm; whether this arises from the density or rarity of the Matter, or from the illusion of the *Devil*, let the Philosophers Judge; so when publick and private Justice go hand in hand, it makes a happy and blessed People. But when these are neglected or separated, it brings in Destruction as a deluge upon a People; for *Justice* is like the *wrest* of a Musical Instrument, that puts all the jarring Strings into tune; it is the Ballance and Weight of the Common-wealth, that gives every Man his due. And it is the Life and Soul, and cement of a Society. For our Ancestors may leave us a Patrimony, but it is *Justice* that preserves it. Armies may conquer *Kingdoms*, but it is *Justice* that confirms and establishes them. And a City may be safe without a Fortress, but never without *Justice*; without this, Men would devour one another, as the greater Fish do the less. The Rich would enslave the Poor, the strong trample upon the weak, and the bold and arrogant crow and insult over the humble and meek Spirited, in a word, *Justice* is both the Glory and Unity of a Nation. And where that is wanting, nothing but Destruction follows; for Zach. 7. 11. *Because, says*
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God, they refused to hearken unto Justice, and pull'd away their Shoulders, I would not bear them, but scatter'd them with a Whirlwind; and Isa. 1. 21. *How is the faithful City become a Harlot, it was full of Judgment, Justice lodg'd in her, but now they are Murtherers, and why?* But because they are bad Justices, and thus much for publick Justice, private Justice is the next Member of the Division, which has also two parts, *Commutative* and *Distributive*. The first is to wrong no Man willingly by Violence or Deceit, in forcing what he has from him, by a strong Hand, or by over-reaching him in Bargains, which the wise Man says, *sticks between the buyer and the seller, as the Nails do between the Stones*. God has declared his Displeasure so much against this Sin, that the Scripture do's not denounce more Woes against any one Sin, (Hypocrisie only excepted) *As the deceitful Man shall not outlive half his days*; and Psal. 12. God will root out deceitful Lips. And for this very reason it is believed, God did forbid the wearing of Linsy-wolsy Garments, and the offering in Sacrifice of an hollow-hooft Beast, because they were resemblances of a deceitful Heart; but alas, in these our days, the Dove-like simplicity is turned into the Serpentine Cunning, insomuch, that it is grown into a Proverb, that Plain dealing is a Jewel, but he that uses it, will die a Beggar. St. Ambrose observes, that the Crab-fish desiring

ring to eat the Oyster, watches till she opens against the Sun, and then throws a Pebble between its shells to hinder it from closing, and so compasses its ends. And this is the practice of not a few of us. If *Naboth's Vineyard* will not come by force, it must be got by fraud. And if open Violence will not bring our Designs to pass, Perjury, False-witnessing, Circumventions and Hypocrisie shall effect our Desires: But let me tell you, that whether it be Violent, or Fraudulent, it is all one before God, who hath said, *Let no Man Oppress or Defraud his Brother*; for God is the avenger of all such, and will be most severe in punishing them earlier or later, considering it was one of the Miracles of the *Manna*, that he that gathered much, had but an *Omer* full, and he that gathered little, had as much; an *Omer* full was enough for every Man's Stomach. Thus they that apply themselves industriously to their Calling, shall not want God's Plenty; when the young *Lions* shall lack and suffer Hunger. *I have been young, and now am old, says David, and I never saw the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* And methinks it is enough, not only to bring the unjust Man to Repentance, but also to strike him into *Balshazar's* paralytick Posture, to consider that the whole Christian World does agree with *St. Austin*, that *Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituitur ablatum.* There can be no forgiveness of the Sin, nor

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consequently Salvation, without Satisfaction for, and Restitution of Goods unjustly and fraudulently taken from him. And you must further take notice, that this commutative Justice, reaches not only to a Man's Goods, or his Estate, but also to his Reputation, and good Name, and therefore it forbids raising false Reports and Calumnies of our Neighbours. And he that gives too open an Ear, and too easie credit to such Tattlers and Detractors; and thereupon without any further enquiry, vents his Passion against, and speaks to the derogation and prejudice of the Person traduced, is not less guilty, than the first raiser of the Calumny; for one counterfeits the Kings Coin, and the other vends it: For these words in the 23^d of *Exodus*, *Thou shalt not raise a false Report*; according to the Original is, thou shalt not have to do with *any false Reports*, neither by raising them as the *Author*, or spreading them, as the *Reporter*, or by reviving them as the *Approver*. And the first, and grossest, way of wronging our Brother in this Sense is, when we feign and devise something out of our own Heads, to lay to his Charge, without any ground of Truth, as *David* speaks, they *lay'd to my charge, things that I never did*. The second way is, when we upon some small ground of truth, run descant at pleasure in our Information, interweaving many untruths, perverting the Speeches and Actions

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of those we have a pique at, to make their matters ill, when they are not : Or otherwise aggravating of them, to make them seem worse than they are ; as News was brought to *David*, when *Ammon* only was slain, that *Absolon* had murder'd all the King's Sons ; for it is an easie thing by Misconstruction, to deprave whatever is innocently done or spoken, which if Men will without an impartial discussion of the truth of the thing, give too easie a credit to, must be the bane of all civil Conversation. Nay, farther I will yet add, that he that speaks truth in an undue time, with intention to bring mischief upon another, is in the Language of the *Scripture* a Lyar, and a raiser of false Reports. As for Instance, *Doeg* told *Saul*, when *David* went into the House of *Abimeleck* no more than what was true, and what he had seen, and what became an honest Man to do ; yet because he did it to bring mischief upon *Abimeleck*, *David* charges him, *Psal.* 52. with telling of Lies, *Thy Tongue* says he, *imagineth Wickedness, and with Lyes thou cuttest like a sharp Razor, thou hast loved Unrighteousness more than Goodness, and to talk of Lyes more than Righteousness, thou hast loved always to do hurt, O thou false Tongue.* And the Injury that is done to the aggrieved Person by these false Reports, is greater than of any other kind ; for if a Man has his House Robb'd, or his Purse taken from him
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on the High-way, or sustain loss in his Person, Goods or Estate, by Fraud or Violence, or Casualty, he may have possibly Restitution made him, or he may live by his Industry, and Providence, to repair or recover that loss again: But he that has his Credit, Name, and Reputation call'd in question, sustains a loss by so much greater, than any loss in his Goods and Fortune, by how much a *good Name is better than great Riches*. A Man may out-wear other Injuries, or outlive them; but a defam'd Person, no satisfaction from the Accuser, no acquittal from the Judicious, nor no subsequent Endeavours in himself can so restore him in *Integrum*; but that when the Wound is heal'd, yet he shall carry the Mark, and Scar of it to his Grave. I wish this were seriously considered by us all, that we might be as tender in wronging one another in this kind, as we would be unwilling to be so dealt with our selves; if we were, certainly some Men would not make it their business to go like Pedlars from House to House, with packs of Lyes and Calumnies, vending that for Merchantable Ware, which they neither have the Courage nor Honesty to make good. And thus much shall suffice for the first part of private *Justice*, which is *Commutative*. The second branch of private *Justice* is *Distributive*, that is, to give every Man his due, not willingly putting any to the trouble and expence of re-

covering it; which God looks upon as so necessary a Duty, that he was content to be at the charge of a Miracle, for the Prophet's sake, to raise the Ax out of the Water, that he might restore it to the Owner, and multiplied the poor Widows Oil Miraculously, that she might be able to pay her Debts. And this *Distributive Justice* may be subdivided into the several Relations of the World; for there is a Justice due from the Parent to the Children, which is to love them. *Solomon* knew the true Mother of the Child by her Love: Men without Natural Affection are Monsters, and reckoned amongst the Plagues of the last times. This love of the *Parent*, must not be evidenc'd in an imprudent fondness of their Children (like the Ape, that with her too much fondness, hug'd her young one to Death,) but in providing for their Maintenance, and bringing them up in the fear of *God*; for which end they must be as careful to instruct them, as they are by swathing of them to hinder the distortion of their Members, because the Soul is much more pretious and valuable than the Body, and their Youth is the fittest time for this: And therefore it was, that *Antipater*, lest Miss education might bring Luxury into *Sparta*, demanded fifty Children from the *Lacedemonians* to educate them, and offered an hundred aged Persons for them; because Children like Wax, are fitted for any Impression. And like

like young Plants, may be bended either way, either to cry *Hosanna* to *Christ*, or thou *bald pate* to *Elisha*; for Children, like Arrows, grow not naturally in the Wood, but are fashioned by the *Artist*. And *Cant. 5. 8. If thou knowest not, these are the Shepherds, these are the Kiddy*. It was the policy of *Julian the Apostate*, for subverting of the *Christian Religion*, to hinder the Education of *Children*; and as Parents are obliged to instruct their *Children*, so they are bound in Justice to give them due Correction; for *being there is a bundle of folly in the Heart of the Child*, the rod of Correction must bring it out. *Eli's* Indulgence, proved the ruin of himself and Family; Parents are likewise bound to pray for them, as *Monica* did for *St. Austin*, and *Job* for his Sons; for Parents Prayers hath great power to further the good of their Children: and there is a Justice likewise due from the *Children* to their Parents, to Reverence them, as *Solomon* (tho' a King) did his Mother *Bathsheba*, because the contemners of Parents are Accursed, *The Ravens of the Vallies shall pick out the Eyes of him that mocks his Father*. To rejoyce them, and make them glad by doing well, to obey them as the *Rechabites* did their Father, for which they are approved of by *God*; and the rather, because *Childrens Disobedience is a sign of ruin to come*, 1 *Sam. 2. 23*. And to maintain them if they need it, as *Joseph* did *Jacob*, and *St. John* his

adopted Mother the Virgin *Mary*. There is likewise a *Justice* due from the Husband to his Wife, to love her, and not to be bitter to her; *Not to be a Lion in his House, nor franlike in his Family*. As the wise Man terms it, *to give Honour to them*, as the weaker *Vessel*, to remove occasions of Jarring, as *Abraham* did *Hagar*; and *Wives must be Subject and Obedient to their Husbands*, 1 Cor. 11. 7. The covering of Women's Heads, was a sign of Subjection. And thence it was, that *Rebecah* vail'd her self to meet *Isaac*, Gen. 24. 63. she ought to be her Husbands Mirror or Glass, to Simpathize with him in Joy or Grief. There is also a *Justice* due from the *Prince* to the *Subject*, to consider that they are the *Ministers of God for their Good*, Rom. 13. 4. and not for their own Ease and Pleasure: *Ahasuerus* watcht while others slept, and Thoughts troubled *Nebucadnezzers* Head. His first and principal care must be, for upholding the true *Religion*; Secondly, to govern according to *Law*. We have an excellent Pattern of this in *Ahasuerus*, *Esther* 1. 13. *Themistocles* told *Symonides* a Poet, desiring his favour in a bad Cause, as you would not be a good Poet, if you transgress the rules of Verse, so should not I be a good *Magistrate*, if I transgress against the *Laws*. I wish this were observed amongst us that are *Christians*; for the want of this Integrity, and thro' the corruption of the Times, the
Laws

Laws now-adays are like Spiders Webbs, which hold *small* Flies, and suffer the *great* ones to break through and escape: But it is the Magistrates Duty first to punish evil doers, because the preservation of his People in Peace, Wealth and Godliness, being his chief business, he should aim at: The Infliction of a moderate Punishment, according to the Nature and Quality of the Offence, for Example to others, *preserves* more by deterring them from the like Crime, than it *destroys*; and is so far from being reproveable, that it is acceptable to God: for so was the Zeal of *Phineas*, when the remissness of the *Benjamites*, proved pernicious to themselves. *Thou hast let go a Man worthy of Death*, saith God unto *Ahab*, *thy Soul shall be for his Soul, and thy People for his People*: And that's the reason why the Sword is put into the Magistrates Hands, *That he may punish evil Doers, without respect of Persons, or Reward*, Exod. 33. *without Pity*, Dent. 19. and without Delay, *Psal.* 101. but then as *Justice* requires, he should punish the Bad: So likewise, *Secondly* it requires, that he should praise and protect, and reward them that do well; the one to *Encourage*, the other to *Defend*, and the third to *Oblige*.

There must be a Staff to support the *Good*, as well as a Rod to correct the *Bad*, the supple Oil of Lenity, as well as the Wine of Acrimony: And hence it is, that in Scrip-

ture, *Kings* are stild *Fathers*, *Saviours*, and *Shepherds*; and in *Daniel* 4. 21. are compared to a goodly Tree full of fine Leaves, and abounding with Fruit; that is, affording both Protection and Nourishment to their Subjects: They are shadowed out by those brazen Pillars which *Hieron* made for *Solomon*, having Chapiters and Crowns upon their Heads, adorned with *Lillies*, that is, spotless Innocency; and *Chains*, that is, for the punishment of *Evil Doers*; and *Pomegranats*, for the praise of them that *do well*: In short, as the Sun dispels Darknes, so Bounty and Lenity in a *Prince*, with an equitable Administration of *Justice*, drives away Discontents from his *Subjects*: and there is also a *Justice* due from the Subject to his Prince, and that is Obedience and Tribute; *For to obey is better than Sacrifice, but Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*; *Joshua* 1. 16. *All that thou commandest us we will do, and whither soever thou wilt send us we will go.* There is likewise a *Justice* due from the *Minister* to his *Parishioners*, to feed them with wholsom Food; and from them to their *Ministers*, to obey them as the Ambassadors of *God*, in what relates to their Spiritual Good; not to beget an ill Opinion of them in others, by their pique and prejudice, hindring their doing Good; not to force them to be at Expence and Trouble in recovering their Dues; and the Minister must deal with his Flock, as a Steward intrusted to

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dispense the Mysteries of *God* unto them. And they must respect him as the Messenger, by whom *God* is pleas'd to reveal his Will unto them ; the Conscientious discharge of which, both in Minister and People, shall afford more real comfort at the hour of Death, than thousands in annual Revenues. I could enumerate several more Particulars, into which this Distributive *Justice* might be divided, as Plaintiffs and Defendants, Judges, Jurors and Criminals ; but I shall content myself with what I have mentioned, knowing that from thence, you your selves are able to supply what I omit ; and therefore now instead of proceeding to the *second* Particular in the Exposition, to *love Mercy*, which I intend for the Subject of another Day, I shall only at this time close all, with an earnest desire that you would consider, that the Holy Sacrament is to be administred, and hope there is not any of you that is not so free from Injustice to others, that you will not be so unjust to your selves, as to turn your backs upon it ; but are resolv'd for the future, to repent of what you have offended in that kind against others ; and be prepar'd, if you are not now for it, against the Solemn Festival of *Easter* now approaching. If you do not Communicate, I must tell you, you are not only unjust to your selves, in neglecting to make use of the means whereby so great a Benefit is conveyed , if duly received ,
but

but also unto God, who requires it from you, as a Mark and Badge of your Profession. Therefore I entreat all of you not to be averſe for the future, to the receiving of this Holy Sacrament, which is called the *Eucharist*; because at the Institution of it, *Chriſt* gave thanks to his Father, and because that at our receiving of it, we offer it up a Sacrifice of Thankſgiving: And it is alſo call'd the Holy Communion; because, that by it we are both united to *Jeſus Chriſt* as our Head, and to one another as his Myſtical Body; and methinks to be diſunited from him by not receiving of it, ſhould make you all more forward to Communicate; and it is called the *Supper* of the *Lord*, both because of the time it was Inſtituted, and because by it we receive the Spiritual Nouriſhment of our Souls. As a Lamp is extinguiſh'd without it be ſupply'd with Oil, ſo that Soul is famiſh'd that wants theſe Conduits of Grace. This is the true *Manna*, the Food of Life and Immortality; and a devout Receiver, is a thouſand times more welcom to *Chriſt*, than a curious Enquirer. We read of *Lycurgus*, that to oblige his Country-men to the obſervation of his Laws, he made them all take an Oath to obey them till he returned, and then baniſhed himſelf with a purpoſe never to return, cauſing his Aſhes after his Death to be caſt into the Sea, leaſt his Country-men getting them, ſhould think themſelves abſolv'd from
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their Oath. So our Saviour *Jesus Christ* being to depart out of this *World*, binds us to the observation of this Holy Communion till his return, intending never to return in *Humility*, but in *Glory*. We must not therefore because of this Obligation, say with *Easter*, *If I perish, I perish*, so if we receive, we receive, for there is a more Christian *if* than this; that is, if I will be obedient to the Will of *Christ*, I must receive: And therefore think not your selves good *Christians*, or in a State of Salvation, so long as you neglect this Blessed Sacrament. But examine your selves, *and eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup*; for here is a glass that represents unto us the Passion of our *Saviour*; and here is an Antidote against the Poison of the Infernal Serpent; here is the little Vessel of *Meal*, and the Cruise of *Oil*, whence the poor Widow, the *Church of Christ*, may sustain her self in the days of *Famine*. And though the Vessel be but small, yet the precious Viands will never fail thee; for here is that Inestimable *Jewel*, which our best and dearest Friend *Jesus Christ* left with us, to keep in remembrance of him; who gave his *Flesh* to be our *Food*, his *Blood* to be our *Drink*, his *Soul* to be the *price* of our *Redemption*, and his *Godhead* to be the reward of our *Piety*. Here is the true Pool of *Bethesda*, where we may be cured of all our *Infirmities*: And though we do not see *Christ* visibly

visibly Present, yet as the troubling of the Waters was a sign of the presence of the *Angel*. So here under these Sacramental Symbols, *Christ Jesus* do's by an inexpressible way enter into the Soul. O Happy, thrice Happy we, if our Sins or Unbelief, or Uncharitableness, or Injustice, or private Animosities, or want of Preparations, do not set a bar against his Grace. If we be thus prepared, let us approach to the Table of the Lord, let us dip our Tongues in the blood of our Redeemer, and let us come with the Humility of the *Centurion*, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shoul'st enter under my Roof; and yet what's the confidence of the poor Soul in the Gospel, May I but touch the Hem of his Garment, I shall be whole: And thou, O sweet Jesus, that didst not disdain a nasty Stable for thine Inn, nor a hard Manger for thy Lodging, and to be made a Companion of brute Beasts, disdain not us for our sensual Affections; but vouchsafe to take up a Lodging in our hard Hearts, though they be not purified according to the purification of the Sanctuary. Prepare us, O Lord, and we shall be prepared for the King of Glory to come into. Which King, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory for ever. Amen.*

DISCOURSE. III.

Of Mercy in Relieving the Poor.

M I C A H VI. 8.

*He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is Good,
and what doth the Lord require of thee, but
to do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk
humbly with thy God?*

THE last time I Discoursed on these words, I spoke of doing *Justly*, which was the first thing in the Exposition; and without repeating what I then delivered, I shall now speak directly of the Particular in the Exposition, *to love Mercy*.

But first, I must crave leave to answer an Objection, that is, why the *Prophet* says, *to love Mercy*, rather than to be *Merciful*? *First*, to direct the Affection to a right Object, to others, rather than our selves: *Secondly*, to shew that Charity should proceed from Conscience, and not from Vainglorious respects

spects: For a Man may do Acts of Mercy for indirect Ends, though he is without *Bowels*, as the Scripture calls an *hard-hearted Man*. Thirdly, To shew that though a Man has no great Ability to do External Acts of *Charity* and *Mercy*; yet if he has a liberal Mind, it is accepted by God, as the *Goats Hair* that was offered for the *Tabernacle*, the *Widows Mite*, and a *Cup of cold Water* shews, that the Will is accepted for the Deed; and this is the reason why the Prophet says, to *love Mercy*, rather than to be *Merciful*. There are two Acts of *Mercy*, to *Give*, and to *Forgive*; the latter respects our *Enemies*, and such only as have injured us, the other respects the whole Posterity of *Adam*, and more especially the *Household of Faith*, and such as are in *Necessity*.

Mercy is the Crown of God, for it is over all his Works; neither is there anything wherein frail Man does more resemble his Creator, than in the exercise thereof: And therefore it is, that our Saviour says, *be ye therefore Merciful, as your Heavenly Father is Merciful*; which as, must not be understood for the Measure, (for that we cannot equal) but for the Manner of it: and here in this Chapter God prefers *Mercy* before *thousands of Rams*, and *ten thousand Rivers of Oyl*. And Christ left the Poor and Needy to be his *Receivers* upon Earth, and what *Charity* is shewn to them, he owns it done to himself; Forasmuch, says he, *as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it to me*;

me; for I was Hungry, and ye fed me, I was Naked, and ye clad me, I was a Thirst, and ye gave me Drink, I was Sick and in Prison, and ye visited me; and St. James tells you, that pure Religion, and undefiled before God the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless in their Affliction. It may be demanded, how this is made an Act of Religion towards God, and not rather, (as indeed it is) an Act of Charity and Mercy towards Man. I answer, that Religion (as all other Vertues) has three Acts: The First is *Elicit* or *Internal*, that is, a *Spiritual* Worship or Service of the *Soul*. For God is a Spirit, and must be worshipt in Spirit and in Truth. The Second is *External*, as the *Explication* of the former, as bowing of the Knee, prostration of the Body, are Acts of Religious *Piety*; for God, which is creator of our Bodies and Souls, expects the Service of both. The Third is, *Actus Imperatus*, that is, the Act of any other Vertue ordered by Religion to the Service of God. And thus charitable Actions, whensoever they aim at God's Service and Worship, become also *Pious*. And thus you see, that to do Acts of *Mercy* with reference to the *Glory* of God, is a part of that pure Religion which is so acceptable to the Lord; and therefore it is that *Isaiah* says, Chap. 58. 66. *Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, to let the Oppressed go free, and to take of the heavy Burthen.*

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Here is not only an *Acceptation*, but an *Election* of, and a *Delight* in, and a preferring of those *Acts of Mercy* to more formal and glittering *Devotions*. And therefore it is, that they are sometimes called *Sacrifices as to do Good*, and to *Communicate* forget not, for with *such Sacrifices* God is well pleas'd. Forget not, as if that other things may be forgotten without great prejudice; but be sure to have this still imprinted in your Minds; for which *St. Paul* disdains not to become a *Remembrancer*. And he says, forget not to do good, as if other *Vertues* were but half Good, in respect of *Mercy*; and he adds, with *such Sacrifices* to have us take notice, that every *Alms* given for *Christs* sake, is not only a *Sustenance* to the Receiver, but also a *Sacrifice* to the God of Heaven. And he says, he is well-pleas'd, that is, he takes a *Spiritual gusto* in them, which the same Apostle, *Phil. 4. 18.* expresses more *Emphatically*; I am full, *Having receiv'd from Epaphroditus, the things which were sent from you, an Odor of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice well pleasing and acceptable to God.* And thus you see that Works of *Mercy* are not only acceptable unto God, but they are his Contentment and Delight, *they are sweet smelling Sacrifices*, or they are above all *Sacrifices*; and therefore says our Saviour, *Go ye and learn what this is, I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*, and *Daniel 4. 27.* O King, let my Council be acceptable to thee, break of

thy Sins with Righteousness, and thine Iniquity with Mercy towards the Poor. The vulgar Latin reads *Redime*, that is, Redeem; and *Prov.* 16.6. *By Mercy and Truth Iniquity is purged*, and *Luke* 11.41. *Give Alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean to you*: But yet we must not from hence conclude, that *Alms* are a sufficient satisfaction to God, and that they purge away Sin or Sanctify all other things to us, for these are but Umbrages; for King *Nebuchadnezer* a Tyrant and an *Infidel*, was not in a Condition (as all Men must acknowledge) to make Satisfaction to God; neither were a little Alms sufficient to counter-balance such Abominations as he committed: for it is the blood of *Jesus Christ* that purgeth us from all Sin: But Alms are evidences of true Repentance, by which God is pacified; I say, *by* which, and not *for* which, *but for the Merits of Jesus Christ*, and infallible Signs and Consequences of such a Disposition, and renders us capable of Remission and Reconciliation: But they are not the price for which our Sins are forgiven; for there is a double *Redemption*, the one *perfect*, the other *imperfect*. The former is the payment of a just proportionable price; the latter is, whenever one follows the other; not as a cause proceeding, but as a Condition or Means conducing to Forgiveness; or as a requisit to the Application of a price paid by *Christ*, so then there

is a double *Satisfaction*, the one of *Justice*, the other of *Complacence*: The one requires an *Arithmetical* proportion, the other depends wholly upon Promise or Acceptation, which is no more than to bring forth *fruits* worthy of Repentance; if Men's Minds were set as much upon Devotion and Contradiction, here is nothing that admits either of Question or Exception. Every good Work is a seed of Glory, but Alms Deed more especially, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully*; and Verse 10. *He that ministreth seed to the sower, doth minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, that is your alms-deed*; and Ecclesiastes 11. 1. *Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shall find it after many days. Cast it, that is, not slowly, or niggardly, but with a quick and full Hand. Cast it, that is, not only to those that are nigh thee, but also to those that are remoter from thee. Cast thy Bread, God's Blessing is the staff of Bread, and Bread is the staff of Man's Life; for by it all manner of Sustenance is understood, and therefore we are bid to pray, Give us this Day, our daily Bread. Charity and Hospitality, is for necessary and substantial Viands, and not for new fangled, invented Dainties: And he says, thy Bread, not another Man's Bread; for some are very bountiful at a-*
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nother Man's Cost : But the Text says ; it must be *thy Bread*, not gain'd by Fraud or Rapin, which shews, that God loves to be served with a Man's own proper *Substance*, *Prov. 3. 9.* And Lastly, *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters*, where it seems for the present to be lost. When there appears no hopes of Restitution, or *upon the Waters*, that is, the *People* ; for *Revelations 17. 15.* the *Waters* signify *much People*, and after many days thou shalt find it, that is, both here and hereafter ; for *Piety* has the promise of this *Life*, and of that which is to come. In this *Life* thou shalt find it in thy Estate, *The liberal Man* says Solomon, *shall have Plenty, and he that watereth shall have Rain* ; for you see that the Widow of *Sareptas* charity to *Elijah* in the days of *Famine*, did by God's Blessing procure a Livelyhood for her self and her Son. Secondly, In this *Life*, that is, in the happy fruition of a good Conscience, *Charge them* (says the *Apostle*) *that are rich in this world, that they be ready to distribute, laying up for themselves a good foundation* ; for tho' works of *Mercy* are in themselves, but a tottering Foundation for the joys of Heaven, yet they are a good foundation for the hidden comforts of a quiet Conscience ; for God's *Mercy* to us is the *Seal*, and our *Mercy* to our poor Brethren, is the *Impression*. And as the *Impression* proves the *Seal*, so our *Mercy* to others for *Christ's* sake, is a good proof of

God's mercy to us. *Thirdly*, in the *Life to come*, that is, at the day of Judgment, *for blessed are the Merciful, they shall find Mercy*: There is a pretty Allegory of a Man that had three Friends, the *first* he loved better than himself, the *second* he loved as himself, the *third*, he loved less than himself. This Man having committed a capital Crime, went to his *first* Friend, but he afforded him no other Assistance, than that he could do him no good; yet because of their rare Friendship, he would (in case he should be condemned) furnish him with a Winding-sheet. The *second* gave him as cold Comfort, that he could not help him, but yet he would accompany his *Herse* to the Grave. The *third*, whom he valued least, proved his best *Friend*, and assur'd him, he would wait upon him to the *Judge*, and be his *Advocate*, and plead his Cause. The *first* Friend is the Riches and *Mammon* of this World, which we love better than our selves, yet afford us nothing when we die, but a Winding-sheet. The *second* is our Kindred and Acquaintance, whom we love as our selves, but all their kindness is to accompany us to the Grave, and there leave us. The *third*, whom we love less than our selves, are works of Charity and Mercy, and they never leave us, nor forsake us, but plead for us before the Tribunal of *Christ*, and this is a Friend indeed. *Fourthly*, In the *Life to come*,
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that is, in *Heaven*, he that is *Merciful*, rewardeth his own Soul; therefore our Saviour says, Luke 16. 4. *Make ye friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when they fail, they may receive you with everlasting Habitations, the mammon of unrighteousness*, that is, Goods not unjustly gotten, but unjustly detain'd, when we can spare them, and our poor Brethren stands in need of them: *Lay up treasures for your selves in Heaven, where the moth do's not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.* And the reason why it is as hard to raise a Man's thoughts up to Heaven, as to make a Millstone go upwards, is, because they have sent no *Treasure* thither before them; you see then how true it is, *that it is more blessed to give, than to receive, when a cup of cold water shall not loose a Reward*: The Scriptures and the Fathers are not more plentiful in any one thing, than in commanding works of *Mercy*, nor God more bountiful in rewarding any Service done to himself at the Day of Judgment. And *Christ* will punish or reward, according to a Man's Practicing, or not Practicing of Charitable Works, as if that were the only *Unum Necessarium*. *Come ye blessed of my Father, I was hungry and ye fed me; and Go ye cursed into everlasting burning, I was hungry, and ye fed me not.* It was the Observation of one of the *Antients*, that he never knew a *Merciful Man* die a bad Death. And

this was the reason that God commanded the *Israelites* when they reap their Fields, that they should leave the Gleanings; and when they beat their *Olives*, and gather'd their *Grapes*, that they should not beat every Bough, nor gather every Cluster; but leave some for the *Poor*, the *Fatherless*, and the *Widow*, and *Strangers*; and though the *Scripture* should not instruct us, yet Nature do's inform us, in this particular; for we see, Water will not pass by an empty place without filling it; and we see the very Swine will run to help one of their own kind in Distress. *Titus* though an Heathen, used to say at Night, that, that day in which he did not do some acts of Mercy, he lost the Day: And the *Turks* will not suffer one of their own Religion to be a common Beggar, and become a Laughing-stock (as they use to speak) to the prophane Nations. Whatsoever Talents God has given any of us, it is as Stewards to account for them, and not as Owners of them, for our own particular use; that so every Man may stand in need of another, and no Man be a Common-wealth to himself. To sum up all in a word, you see how *Mercy* is commended by *Nature*, and commanded by *God*; how he accepteth it, prizeth it, and rewardeth it with Plenty, and a good Conscience in this *Life*; and in the *Life to come* at the day of Judgment, with the *Kingdom of Heaven*. You see it is *Religion*,

gion, and the only Fast God requires, and a sweet smelling Sacrifice, above all Sacrifices. Never did this Doctrine need to be preacht more than now, not only because of this solemn time of *Lent*, (in which the Primitive *Christians* did shew more Charity than at other times; because they did then subtract from their usual Expences, for the better enabling them to supply the necessities of the Poor) but also because the wants of many are so pressing, and Charity is grown so cold, when Men assert to be so much *Solifdians*, all *Faith*, and no *Works*; that in truth they are become *Nullifdians*, no *Faith* nor *Works*. When many are of *Achab's* humour, 1 *Kings* 18. 5. who took more care in the Summer for his *Horses and Mules*, than for his distressed Brethren; and too many whose indifferent condition of living competently in this Country, God has reduced to Beggars. I say, though to them it may seem unseasonable to preach *Charity*, yet it is necessary for them to have charitable Minds, and also a preparation of *Heart* for charitable Actions, whensoever it shall please God to make them able. And in the mean time to say with the Prophet, *Habak.* 3. 17, 18. *Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I*

will rejoyce in the Lord, I will be glad in the God of my Salvation. And thus much of the first Act of *Mercy*, as it respects the *Poor*: Two things are further to be considered, before I speak of the second Act of *Mercy*, that respects our *Enemies*. As *First*, who is the object of *Mercy*; and *Secondly*, who we ought to shew *Mercy* to: For answer to the former, every Son of *Adam* is the Object, every one that stands in need of our help, every one that hath the Image of *God* stamp't upon him; I mean, not only that sweet Harmony and Consent, that exact Conformity of the Soul to *God* in true Holiness, but even the reasonable Soul, with all its other Faculties, its elevated *Understanding*, the Majestick *Structure* of the Body, the Dominion over the Creatures, and those defaced *Relicks* of Godliness, those exerpted *Keys* of Divine *Light*, those *sparks* of Heavenly *Fire*, and those *Seeds* of *Piety*, which are not so totally extinguish't in the *Soul*; but that Grace may revive them, and give every *Seed* its own *Body*, Eccles. 11. 2. *Give a portion unto seaven, and also unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil will be upon earth, give to those that are present, and as in the former Verse, cast thy Bread to those that are absent, give a Portion; that is, not all thy Alms to one, and nothing to others, so that (as the Apostle phraseth it, One is Hungry, and another is Drunken; but give to each a proportion*

tion according to his *Necessities*, and thine own *Abilities*. And therefore the *Scripture* calls it a *dealing of Bread*, and the *breaking of Bread*, which implies a Distribution to *Seaven*, that is, to thine ordinary *Alms-Men*; for so many the *Wealthy Jews* did use to keep in Memory of the *seaven Days* of the *Creation*, as some *Christians* of old maintained *twelve*, in Memory of the *Twelve Apostles*: And also to *Eight*, that is, to any *Necessitous Person* above that Number, or to *Seaven*, and also to *Eight*, that is, both to *Jews* and *Christians*; the one observing the *Seventh Day* for their *Sabbath*, and the other observing the *Eighth*; or to *Seaven*, that is, to very many, *Seaven* signifying a Multitude: And also *Eight*, that is, to every one according to the Greek Adage *ἅπαντα ὀκτὼ* *Eight is all*. So the Sense is the same with that of our *Saviour*, *Luke 6. 3. Give to every Man that asketh of thee*, that is, not to every one that *aboundeth*, but to every one that *wanteth*; not examining too *strictly*, nor searching too *curiously* into the Conditions and Merits of such as want; *That is, to give every one that asketh*, saith *Solomon*, *for thou knowest not what evil shall be on Earth*. That is, by thy seasonable relief thou mayest prevent woful Casualties, that may fall upon thy poor Brethren; and thou mayest avert many impending losses from thy self: And *Prov. 5. 16. Let thy Fountains be dispersed*

pers'd abroad, and Rivers of Waters in the Streets. Some Men turn the Cock, and open the Cistern continually towards their own Home, as if they were born only for themselves; or if they turn it a little towards a near Friend or Kinsman, it is much: but for dispersing abroad, or for any streams of their bounty in the Streets, they excuse it as *Judas* did, *what needs this wast.* Verily *Dives* his Doggs that licked the Sores of poor *Lazarus*, shall rise up in Judgment against these close-fisted *Nabals*, and condemn them. And *Galat. 6. 10.* *As we have Opportunities, let us do good unto all Men, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith,* to the Faithful specially: But not only they are the principal objects of Charity, but yet others are not excluded, do good to all; yea, seek opportunities of doing good, *Titus 3. 14.* *Let ours also learn to maintain good Works,* the Greek word *περίσταται*, signifies to stand before, which is a Metaphor taken from Tradesmen, who stand or walk before their Shop, that is indeed, to wait for all opportunities of doing Good, *as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all Men;* and what answer will they make to *Christ*, who shall judge the Secrets of all Men, according to the Gospel, that challenge all Men into some Men, or perhaps into no Man, who turn specially into only, and translate the *Household of Faith*, into their own particular *Faction.* Let him be a Jew, let him be a Turk, yet he is a fit ob-

object of *Mercy*; but specially if he be a *Christian*, though not of their own Persuasion or Communion. This has been the cause of much mischief in the World, the making of several *Opinions*, several *Religions*, and not distinguishing between a *corrupt Church*, and *no Church*. They who out of a blind love to the Body, cherish its Sores and Ulcers, admit of no *Reformation*; that is, dote so much upon the name of the *Church*, that they will admit of no *Reformation*, that is, the *Papists* offend on the one hand, and they who kill the Body out of a Preposterous hatred to the Sores and Ulcers, that is, out of a detestation of Errors, destroy the Being of the *Church*, as the *Presbyterians* and other Sectaries, are as wide on the other hand. Of all those Errors which these days have hatcht in *Europe* (except those which entrench upon the Godhead it self, as *Socinianism*) there is scarcely any so offensive to Almighty God, as that mortal Hatred, that breach of Charity which is amongst Christians. When our Blessed *Saviour* had related that Parabolical History of the *Samaritan*, who shewed Mercy to the *Jew*, he concludes with a *Goe then, and do likewise*. Yet there cannot be a greater distance imagined, than was between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*. First, in their *Originals*, the one *Israelites*, the other *Assyrians*. Secondly, in their *Religion*, the one worshipt at *Jerusalem*, the other at *Mount Gerasim*. Thirdly,

ly, in their *Possessions*, the *Jews* esteemed the *Samaritans* Usurpers of that Patrimony which God gave to their Fathers. Hence was that deadly feud between them, *said we not well that thou wast a Samaritan, and hast a Devil?* *John* 4. 9. And the *Jews* have no dealings with the *Samaritans*; yet you see by our Saviour, that a *Jew* is bound to shew mercy to a *Samaritan*; which shews, that it is a vain pretension for with-holding our Charity, to say, he is a *leud Fellow*, and by wilful Wast, has brought himself to woful Want; what is that to thee or me; Charity seldom errs in the Object: *Take that which is thine own, and be thou merciful, as thy Heavenly Father is merciful, who causeth the Sun to shine upon the good, and upon the bad, and his rain to fall upon the just and unjust.* Look thou to the Example of our Saviour, who invited the Maim'd, the Blind, and the Halt, without enquiring how they come to fall into that Condition. Some excuse their not practising of Charity; by saying, he is not able to requite me. Let it be so, but remember, that if we do good only to them that do good unto us, what thanks have we, for do not the Publicans even the same? Hadst thou rather Man should be thy Pay-master, than God? *He that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord.* And he will repay with Advantage, not ten per Cent, but an hundred for ten in this *Life*, and Eternal Happiness in that

that which is to come. And hence it is that St. Chrysostom says, that *Usury* is the most gainful of all Arts, and *Alms-Deed* of all Usury. When thou makest a Dinner or Supper, Luke 14. 12. call not thy rich Neighbours, least they invite thee again; but call the poor, that cannot recompence thee, and thou shalt be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just. Thirdly, Others excuse their not practising Charity, by saying, he is mine Enemy; let it be suppos'd, Tet if thine enemy Hunger, give unto him Meat, and in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of Fire upon his Head; besides, that can be no excuse, because a wise Man owes more to his Enemies, than to his Friends; and often-times the greatest Friend, proves the greatest Enemy, either by Ignorance, Connivance, or Flattery; for how many are drawn under the colour of Friendship, sometimes to Riot, and sometimes to Perjury, and sometimes to Injustice, especially when falshood comes cloak't under the name of a Friend, as thy Friend Benhadad: But our Enemies are the Hammars that nail us more closely to God, they are the Brushes that wear themselves to beat off the Dust from us, the Monitors that awaken us from Sin, and makes us stand upon our Guard, knowing they will not let the least Miscarriage in us go untalkt of; they are the fire that purgeth our Dross, and the Water that washeth away our Filth, and the Snuffers that foul themselves, to make

make us burn more brightly; why then as we endure, and approve of a sharp frosty Winter, though it nips and pinches us for the present, because we know it is both healthful to our Bodies; and advantageous to the fruits of the Earth; so we should esteem Enemies in this life, not Joyous for the present, but afterwards they *bring forth the fruits of Righteousness*. For though Enmity comes from the *Devil*, yet the good Effects of it comes from *God*. The Mother is from *Babylon*, but the Daughter is from *Jerusalem*; and therefore a good *Christian* will not forbear doing good, even to an Enemy. The last excuse they have for their Uncharitableness is, that he is a Stranger, and therefore let him be maintain'd where he was born; and say with *Nabal*, *shall I take my bread and my flesh which I have prepared for my self and my servants, and give it to a strangers*: Wilt thou then exclude them from thy Charity, whom God Almighty admits to his own Meats, *that is, the Poor, the Fatherless, the Widow, and the Stranger*; or hast thou a better possession here, than he that said, *I am a Stranger upon Earth, and a Sojourner, as all my Fathers were*? All the Sons of *Adam* are Pilgrims upon the Earth, but the Saints especially, *who seek for a City that is to come*; and *Christians* ought not to be Strangers to one another, *Mark 2. 10. Have we not all one Father? And hath not one God created us?*
 And

And therefore why should we deal Treacherously or Uncharitably with one another. As there is but *one God, one Faith, and one Baptism*, so there ought to be but *one Charity*, comprehending all; for we are all Members of the same Mystical *Body*, we are all enliven'd with the same *Soul*, the *Holy Ghost*; we are called to the same *Hope*, we all serve the same *Lord*, we all profess the same *Faith*, we are signed with the same *Seal*, we fight under the same *Banner*, we acknowledge the same *God*, above all, by his *Excellency*; thro' all, by his *Providence*, and in all, by his *Grace*; and can these be such Strangers.

Yet here are two Cautions not to be forgotten in exercising of *Charity*. *First*, that we are more bound to relieve our own *Poor*, than *Foreigners*; for the order of *Charity* begins with a Man's self; and therefore the Apostle says, *He that provides not for his own, is worse than an Infidel*. It was the prayer of the Elders for *Boas*, *Ruth*. 4. 11. *That he might do worthily in Ephrata, and be famous in Bethlem*; that is, his Native Soil, the place of his Habitation.

The *Second* Caution is, that we ought to distinguish the Impotent from the able *Beggars*; such as *Margitas* in the Poet; who in all his Life, never Digg'd, Plough'd, or did any thing that might tend to Good, as if he were born only to Eat and Drink; wandering Planets, without any settled place to serve either

ther God or their Country in. The Steward in the Gospel said, *I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed*: These Men can Dig, and will not, and they are not ashamed to Beg, tho' they need not. God hath given a Man two Hands, and but one Mouth, and it is a shame, if two cannot provide for one: By the Athenian Law, such a Man was to die, and St. Paul specifies the Death, *by starving, He that will not labour, should not eat*. And thus I come from the object of our Charity, which is all Mankind, to the second Consideration in the Text, how we ought to *shew Mercy*; touching which, I cannot set before you a better Pattern, than that of the good Samaritan, Luke 10. 33. towards the distressed Traveller, first he pitied him. *God threatneth a woe to them that stretched themselves upon their couches, and ate the lambs of the flock, and chaunted to the sound of the viol, and drank wine in bowls, and were not grieved at the afflictions of Joseph*, Amos 6. Ver. 4, 5, 6. This is the ground of the Apostles Exhortation, Heb. 13. 3. *Remember them that are bound, as bound with them, and them that suffer Adversity, as being your selves in the Body*. Secondly, he comes to him, and binds up his Wounds. Charity is not dainty Finger'd, nor squeasy Stomack'd; it rests not only in Affection, but proceeds to Action. What if the Thieves that robb'd the Traveller, did lie sculking thereabouts to make a Prey of him

also?

also? What if some of the Officers of Justice, or some Passengers finding him there, should have apprehended him, as the Author of the Robbery? What Mercy could a Samaritan expect in such a case from the Jews? Those had been plausible pretences for his Neglect, but true Charity is not easily discouraged, and is usually as well its own Security, as Reward. The Fig-tree that bore Leaves, but not Fruit, was accurst by our Saviour, James 2. 14. *If a brother or sister be naked, or destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, depart in peace, be you warm'd and fill'd, notwithstanding you give them not those things that are needful to the Body, what doth it profit.* Thirdly, *He pour'd in wine and oil;* Oil to supple, and Wine to cleanse his Wounds, Oil is a Lenitive, and Wine causes smart; which shews, that Charity seeks not only to please, but to profit. And that every one that spares us, is not a Friend, nor every one that Correcteth us, an Enemy; therefore the wise Man prefers the stroak of a Friend, to the kisses of an Enemy. And it is as much Charity to awaken a Man that has a Lethargy, though it be troublesome to the Person, and he gives him no thanks for it; as it is to bind the hands of a Mad-man, to hinder him from hurting himself or others. Fourthly, He casts not away his Coin profusely, but gives him two pence at a time; which teaches us, that Charity has

an eye to the main Chance. It is *Solomon's* Advice, *To let our waters flow abroad, but to keep the fountain to our selves.* God requires that of our Abundance, we supply the wants of others; but not to straiten our selves to ease them. Yet I confess, it is a grateful thing to God, for a Man to subtract from his own Necessaries, that he may have wherewithal to relieve others; and in this time of *Lent*, which is design'd for Mortification, and more exemplary Charity, it is not only convenient to do so, for enabling us to give Alms to the Poor, without decreasing our Wealth; but also necessary upon the account of preserving our Health, which is in most danger of being impair'd by Intemperance at this Season of the Year, when all the Humours that have been quieted by the Cold, now begins to ferment by the heat of the approaching Sun; Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour with his own hands, that he may have to give: Whence you see, that even a Labourer is not exempted from Works of Mercy, but still according to the proportion, he must present his *Mite*. Lastly, He does all this freely, and is not like the Thorn-bush, that shelters the Sheep from the Storm, but pulls away part of her Fleece for its kindness. As *Seneca* said of Sinister Friendship, so I may say of this cruel Charity, *Negotiatio est potius quam Misericordia*, it is not the Alms of a Christian, but rather

rather the *trucking* of an *Huckster*; not *Mercy*, but *Merchandize*. I have now almost done with the first part of *Mercy*, which is to give: I have only to add, that notwithstanding the excellent things you have heard of it, that you take heed not to be puffed up with believing you *Merit* any thing thereby at *God's Hands*; for that were first to anoint the *feet* of *Christ* with pretious *Ointment*, and then to throw the *Box* at his *Head*; for when we have done all we can, Luke II. 10. 17. we are but unprofitable *Servants*, much more, when our *Hands* is withered up like *Jeroboam's*, seldom out of our *Bosom*. When we have done little or nothing, when our accounts at the day of Judgment shall contain so many *Items* for our *Backs*, for our *Bellies*, for our *Revenge*, for our *Pleasures*, and for our *Vanities*, and so few or none at all; for our *God*, or for our *poor Neighbours*. I have read an old Apologue, of three Virgin Sisters that came down from Heaven to get *Husbands* upon Earth, *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*. *Faith* soon met with a Match, and was Married to *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful; and *Hope* was, and is courted by every one, the *Scholar*, the *Soldier*, and the *Tradesman*; but *Charity* wanders up and down, neglected and disregarded almost by all Men. Yet if we may trust *St. Paul*, she is the fairest, and in some respect the best of all the Sisters, 1 Cor. 13. 13. And now abideth

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Faith,

Faith, Hope and Charity, but the greatest of these three, is Charity. For Charity is the great Seal of Heaven, and the Gate of the Sanctuary, which leads to the Vision of the Blessed Trinity. And as Pliny writes of a Tree that had all sorts of Cions set in it, and bore all manner of Fruit; so this is Charity which sustains all other Vertues, and without which, they are unfruitful. And thus much of the first part of Mercy, to give. I should now proceed to the second part of Mercy, which is to forgive; but this I shall reserve for the next Opportunity, and shall now leave it to your selves to make the Application, which is very easie: and conclude with that of our Saviour, Luke 6. 38. Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom; for with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be meted to you again.

DISCOURSE. IV.

Of Mercy in forgiving Enemies, and of Humility.

M I C H VI. 8.

*He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is Good,
and what doth the Lord require of thee, but
to do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk
humbly with thy God?*

THE last Sunday I told you, there was two acts of *Mercy*, to give, and to forgive; the one respected the *Poor*, and the other our *Enemies*, and those that injur'd us. I dispatcht then the first act, to give, of which I will not now make any Repetition, but proceed to the other act of *Mercy* to forgive; and then go on to the last particular in the Text, *to walk humbly with thy God*. Forgiving of *Enemies* is no less necessary a Duty, than giving to the *Poor*, which I formerly spoke of; for our *Saviour* bids us, *be wise as*

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Serpents,

Of Mercy in forgiving Enemies,

Serpents, that is, careful to avoid all Injuries, but withal, *as innocent as Doves*. And the prime Innocency of the Dove is, that she is so forgetful of Injuries, that though a Man steal away her young ones once a Month, yet she still keeps the same Nest. For as the Weapon must be first pull'd out, before the Wound can be healed, so the Medicines of Salvation do not profit a wounded Soul, until the revenge be first drawn out: Therefore we must be sure not to leave the point of the Weapon within us, which too many revengeful Spirits do, while they say, I will forgive them, because God commands me, but I will never forget them, and I wish it were lawful for me to be avenged on them.

This is but an outward Abstinence, without an inward Renovation, like the *Wolf*, that while the Shepherds were waking, and the Dogs barking, did not devour the *Sheep*, but still retain'd his ravenous Disposition: Or like *Lot's Wife*, who though her Body was out of, yet had her Mind in *Sodom*: or like the *Israelites*, that had left *Egypt*, but yet had a longing mind to their old *Garlick* and *Onions*. This is but a sweeping or garnishing of the House, an outward Reformation without an inward Change, which makes the *unclean Spirit* return with *seven worse Spirits*, and the latter end is worse than the beginning. For while we cherish Vindictive and Revengeful Thoughts one against

against

gainst another, our very *Prayers* cannot please *God*, who forgive us our *Trespases*, but as we forgive them that trespass against us. And the Blessed *Sacrament* becomes poison unto us. For, for this cause says the *Apostle*, many are Sick, and many are weak among you, because ye have *Partialities* and *Quarrels*, and yet presume to come to that Holy Table. Nay, *Martyrdom* it self avails not a revengful Person, 1 Cor. 13. 3. *Though I give my goods to the poor, and my body to be burnt, and have no charity, it profiteth me nothing.* And *Sacrifices* to *God* himself, are not acceptable in this Case; for *Christ* himself Commands, *That before we bring our gift to the altar, we must go and be reconciled to our brother.*

It is reported of *Sylla*, that bloody Monster, that it was hard to know, whether he or his *Malice* died first. To write Injuries in *Marble*, is far from *Christian Mercy*. When the *Disciples* askt *Christ*, shall we call for *Fire from Heaven*, to consume the Cities that will not receive us? (though they had the example of *Elias*, and a far greater Provocation) yet our *Saviour* reprehends them with a, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of.* *Cato* was of a better Temper, when being stricken by a base Fellow, who repenting of the Abuse, begg'd his Pardon, answered, he had forgotten it. And so was *Phocion*, that famous *Athenian*, who when he was to drink the Cup of deadly Poison, which his unkind

Of Mercy in forgiving Enemies,

Country-men had unjustly adjudged him to, commanded his *Son* that he should forget it.

But the rarest and chiefest Pattern of *Mercy* and *Charity*, is our *Saviour*, who died for his *Enemies*, prayed for his *Crucifiers*, kissed *Judas* that betrayed him, cured the Ear of *Malchus* that apprehended him; and bewailed the City of *Jerusalem* with *Tears*, where he knew he should meet with the worst of *U-sages*. Whence you see, that it is the will of *God*, *That we should bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that hurt us*. This is the noblest revenge that we can take, *To love our Enemies, as God loved us*; to pray for them, as *St. Stephen* did for them that stoned him; to procure their *Conversion*, as *Ananias* did; to prevent occasions of *Offence*, as *Jacob* did to *Esau*; to mollifie them with gentle words, as *Abigail* did *David*; to Minister things necessary to them, as *Elisha* did to the *Syrians*, and to receive them into *Mercy*, when they sue for *Grace*, as *Joseph* did his *Brethren*. For thus we shall not only secure our selves of a reward from *Heaven*, for being *Merciful*, but also provide for our own *Safety*, by rebating the edge of our *Enemies* fury. For we see, whilst the *Mouse* and the *Frog* were fighting, they both became a prey to the *Kite*. *Pliny* relates a story of two *Goats*, which met in the midst of a narrow *Plank* laid over a swift *Current*, so narrow, that they neither could

go back, nor pass by one another; and if they did fight, they must both of them be certainly drowned; but one of them crouching down, became a bridge for the other to pass over, and so both were saved. Thus mutual Yielding, and Bending on both sides, prevents breaking, and many of those sad effects which follow Mens Apprehensions of being affronted, would be prevented; *Solomon tells you, that a soft answer turns away wrath*: We see that Wounds do meet, and close in a Scar; and if a Bone be broken, both parts contribute matter to make it stronger than it was before. And therefore it is a shame, that the Differences and Dissensions of *Christians*, should be so slowly healed; we see that strange Trees by Inoculation, are made one. And can there be no way found out to unite the divided Members of *Christ*? If we thus forgive our Enemies, we shall heap *coals of fire upon their Heads*, that is, turn their Malice into fervent Love, or scorch them inwardly with the remorse of a guilty Conscience. For as there is a kind of Thunder that melts the Sword, without hurting the Scabbard; and as the force of a Bullet shot out of a Gun, is abated by meeting with a pack of Wool, so a soft Behaviour pacifieth a furious and passionate Spirit. So was *Esau's* vowed Revenge changed into Love and Kindness, by *Jacob's* courteous Behaviour, and *David's* fury against *Nabal* mitigated

tigated by the winning and discreet answer of *Abigail*; and *Saul's* Heart was stricken with Remorse, by the kindness of *David*. And by doing thus, we shall fulfill the Commandments of God, which enjoyn us, *Exod.* 4. *If thou meetest thine enemies ox or ass going astray, thou shalt bring him back again to him.* In Human Judgment, it is not lawful for the Judge to favour either Party; but Almighty God favours us, by informing us how we should defend our selves against the Devil, *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*: But our corrupted Nature is so Ambitious, that we would have all Men fall down before us, and worship us; and would have our praises founded upon a *Silver Trumpet*, when they do not deserve to be pip'd upon an *Oaten Reed*. Hence it is, that every little Contempt, or conceived Affront is so bitter to us, that it puts us into a great Disorder: If we be but a little advanc'd in Riches or Honour, a Man must not speak innocently of us, what is but common to report, but presently we huff and storm, and vow Revenge: Whereas God knows, it ends all in making our selves Ridiculous, in discovering our Follies and Weakness to the World; of which there cannot be a more certain evidence given, than our easiness to be transported with Passion; and this humour prevails upon many, who are otherwise Irreproveable; and the reason is, because we have too great a value
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for our selves ; for we see that even obedient *Sarah*, who call'd her Husband *Lord* ; yet when she thought her self despis'd by *Hagar*, fell heavily upon *Abraham*, with no less a Passion, *Than my wrong be upon thee, and the Lord judge between me and thee.* And what was *Mordecai's* Cap and Knee to *Haman*, yet it set him on such a fire, that *Mordecai's* blood alone must not quench it, unless the whole Nation of the *Jews* suffered for it. This is not the right way of gaining Honour, neither indeed is the debasing of a Man's self, and making all People Hail Fellow well met with him : for there is a *Mean* between *Lording* it over all, and debasing a Mans self to every mean *Mechanick* ; whose neither Conversation nor Parts, can give any other Advantage, than Censure and Contempt ; but the best way is, to remember that of truth it self, which says, *that those that honour me, I will honour.* For as a *Dial*, when the Sun shines not upon it, stands as an useless Post, no one steps out of his way to look upon it ; but when the beams of the Sun light upon it, every one runs and looks upon it with chearfulness and observance ; so when the ways of a Man please the Lord, as Solomon says, *he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him* ; for they are but God's left Hand, and the Instruments of his Anger, who could have no power over us, except it were given them from above. What madness it it therefore,

fore, with the *Dog* to run at the *Stone*, and bite it, and not discern the *Hand* that threw it? especially, if we consider, that *Revenge* is not ours, but *God's*, who says, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it.* *God* is not like *Baal Berith*, for his revenge sleeps not. When *Julian* persecuted the *Christians*, and ask'd Scoffingly, what the Carpenter's Son was doing, it was well answered, that he was making a Coffin for *Julian*; and so it proved presently after, as *Julian* himself acknowledged, when he cryed, *tandem vicisti Galile,* O *Galilean*, thou hast at last overcome me. Who is amongst us, that injureth not his Brother, either in Word or Deed, and stands not in need of his Pardon: Consider, ought we not to do, as we would be done unto. Our Heavenly *Father* pardons us those Injuries that are incomparably greater, (as being committed against an infinite Essence) than we can suffer; and therefore sure we ought to forgive the wrongs our *Brothers* do us. Consider the Parable of the unjust Steward, who was forgiven all his Debt, but afterwards for his cruel Behaviour to his Fellow-Servants, he was delivered to the Tormentors till he paid the utmost Farthing, with this conclusion of the whole Point, *So shall my heavenly father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from his heart, Matth. 18.* Desire of Revenge, Defaceth the image of god, stoppeth the fountain of his mercy,

cy, *disquiets the conscience, suffocates the spirit of devotion, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost*, and subjects a Man both to the Eternal and Temporal Judgments of God. And thus I have done with the second Act of Mercy, to forgive; and I shall now proceed to speak of the last thing in the Exposition and the Text, in these words, *To walk humbly with thy God*; wherein we have two parts. First, the *duty to walk with God*; Secondly, the manner *humbly*, that is, in Humility. First, of the Duty to *Walk*. Whence observe, that the Soul has feet as well as the Body, the Affections are the feet of the Soul; for come unto me saith our Saviour, *all ye that are weary and heavy laden*; that is, *come unto me*, not with corporal Steps, but with earnest *Desires*, fervent *Prayers*, and true *Faith*. And so the walking disorderly, mentioned in the second to the *Thessalonians* 3. 11. is not understood of a reeling, slippery pace, but of an irregular ungodly *Life*, living and walking here, being the same thing, *Phillippians* 3. *Be followers of me, and mark them that walk so, as you have me for an example.*

So then to walk with God, is to form our Lives and Religion according to his *Will*, and in all our Actions, to behave our selves as in his presence, *Genesis* 6. 9. Thus did *Noah walk with God*, and thus did *Abraham, Genesis* 17. 1. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*; all which thus examined, shews, that

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to walk with God, is to be Religious; now Religion is the true worshipping of one true God by Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures, with a stedfast endeavour to keep the purity of the conscience unspotted, in hopes of the future resurrection from the dead: And this Worship is Twofold, *Internal* and *External*; the *External* Worship is principally Three-fold, the preaching and hearing God's Word, the Invocation of his Name, and the reverent use of the Sacrament. As to the *first*, God requires nothing more earnestly, than that his People be taught the knowledge of him. Son of man saith God, cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet; Go ye preach, and teach, saith our Saviour; and woe is me, saith the Prophet, if I keep silence. As to the *second* Invocation of his Name, Nature it self Dictates it unto us, witness, our lifting up our Eyes and Hands unto Heaven, in any sudden perplexity; and God commands it, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will bear you. Prayer brings God's Grace down unto us, and has such Power and Efficacy in it, that it binds the hands of God; for, Let me alone, saith God to Moses, that my wrath may wax hot against them. The *Third* part of Religion, is the reverent use of the Sacraments; for they are not things indifferent to be used, or not us'd, at our pleasure, because we are commanded to it. And if we would either prove our selves Obedient, or shew that we
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are *Christians*, we must be *Baptiz'd*, to initiate us into *Christianity*, and to wash away our Natural Corruption. And we must *Communicate* to confirm us, and to seal the assurance of *God's* love in *Christ* to us; and thus much for the External Worship of *God*. The *Internal* is the service of the *Spirit*, without which, all our Preaching, Hearing, Praying, Christening and Communicating, are in the Prophet *Hosea's* words, *But like a dough-bak't cake, good for nothing, for God is a spirit. He must, he will, be worshipt in Spirit*; that is, we must have awful thoughts of him, and not suffer our selves to think, what we dare not practise. And this *Religion*, which consists of these parts now mentioned, is placed between *Idolatry* and *Superstition* in the Excess, and *Heresy*, and *Atheism*, and *Infidelity* in the defect: So then you see, that to give true worship to the true *God*, is *Religion*; and Piety to a false *God*, is *Idolatry*. To give false worship to the true *God*, is *Superstition*; to swerve from a part of saving Faith, is *Heresy*, and to deny the whole worship of *God*, is *Atheism* and *Infidelity*. And thus true *Religion*, as all other *Vertues*, has three Acts; the first *Elicit*, which is an inward desire of giving *God* the Honour and Worship due unto him, acknowledging the sovereignty of his Being, with such a lowly Submission, as is not to be communicated to any of his Creatures. The legal Sacrifices
were

were a part burnt with fire, and a part powder'd with Salt, to shew the power of the *Spirits*, with which *God* must be worshipt. The Second act of *Religion*, is External, answering to the former, as an expression of it, as prostration of the Body, vocal Thanksgiving and Prayers which are as due to *God* as the former, being he is Creator of the Body, as well as of the Soul. Outward Ceremonies (I speak not of such as are instituted by *Christ*) as the *Blessed Sacraments*, but such as are instituted by *Men*, however, they may fall into disfavour with *inconsiderate* Persons, as a Learned Author has it, *are notable helps to Devotion, gravity and modesty in the service of God, expressions of those Heavenly desires and dispositions, which we ought to bring along with us, main helps to Attention, furtherers of Edification, visible Instructors, ignorant Mens Books, helps of Memory, exercises of Faith, and the shell that defends the kernel of Religion, and preserves it from Contempt.* And if a Soldier be encouraged to the *Battel* by the sound of the *Trumpet*, and the *Lion* rouseth up his Spirits by lashing himself with his *Tail*, is it not every whit as rational to conclude, that outward Gestures animate, and add Zeal and Fervor to inward Devotions? For as in a Bow, the lower we draw the String, the higher the Arrow mounts; so the lower we prostrate our selves in our Prayers, the more speedily they

they ascend to *Heaven*. The third act of *Religion*, is that which we call *Imperat*; that is, the act of any vertue ordered by Religion to the glory of *God*; but I am yet to learn, how it comes to pass in these latter times, that we have concluded *Religion* so much in the first act, that we have seldom given it leave, to break out either into the second or third Act; as if it were enough for securing of the worship of *God*, to serve him in the Spirit, without any outward evidence either of good Works, or reverent deportment towards him: This I am sure of, the very *Heathens* were the more open-handed towards their *Gods*, the *Baalits* did cut and launce themselves, the *Israelites* parted with their Ear-Rings and Bracelets, and the *Idolater* here in my Text, with his *thousand of Rams*, and his *ten thousand rivers of Oil*. And can you imagine, that their Devotion to their *Idols*, will not condemn our Indevotion to the true God. Religion is so called, from *Religando*, which signifies to *bind*; our Ancestors gave it that Name, because it bound a Man to his God; but we, their more cunning Off-spring, are apt to invert it, and to give it that Name, because it binds God to us; and we expect, that he only should be active in conferring benefits upon us, and we passive in receiving them. And truly it were well, if it were no worse, but to our Shame and Reproach, we are many times too active

in doing what is expressly, not only contrary to his *Will*, but his plain *Commands*, and which in the end, will deservedly bring his Displeasure upon us: But let us not deceive ourselves, for Religion signifies to walk with *God*; and walking implies Action, a Progress, and going forwards in *Piety*, and Holy Actions, unless we do our parts, *God* will do what he has promis'd: And therefore if we walk not with *God here*, we shall not live with *him in Glory hereafter*. And that you may be induced hereunto, consider, that there is not a Text in the whole Book of *God*, which contains not a Motive to *Piety* and Religion, not only that, but the Heavens above us, and Hell beneath us; and the Creatures round about us, call for our *Piety*. Nay, the Members of our Bodies, the Faculties of our Souls, the Mercies of *God*, and the Judgments of *God*, exhort to Religion; *Fear the Lord, and he will bless thy bread and thy water, and take every evil out of the midst of thee*, and Deut. 18. *Blessed shalt thou be in the City, and blessed in the field, blessed in the fruit of thy body, and in the increase of thy flocks, and thou shalt be like a tree planted by the water side*. And the Apostle tells you, that *Piety has the promise of this life, and that which is to come*. This is the end of our Creation, and the end of our Redemption, *that we might serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life*: Nay, this is the end

end of all God's Benefits; *I beseech you brethren*, says the Apostle, *By the mercies of Jesus Christ, that you give up your bodies a reasonable and acceptable sacrifice unto God.* This is the end of all the Crosses and Afflictions he sends upon us, to draw us unto himself; as *Joab* would not come to *Absolon*, till he burnt his own Fields, so we seldom go to God, till he forces us with the rod of Affliction. This we are taught by the example of *Christ*, and by the holy *Angels*, whose care is to serve God, and to perswade us to Holiness, as also from the endeavours of the *Devil*, who does all he can to hinder us from holiness of Life: Nay, our Baptismal Vow, wherein we promised to forsake the *Devil*, and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, and all the carnal desires of the flesh, obliges us unto this, and our reassuming, renewing, and confirming the same Vow at the Sacrament. And if we consider it seriously, now is the time for us to strive more than ordinarily for this *Holiness*; because this life is a *Fair*, wherein we may buy either Toys, or that which is more substantially Good, *Vices* or *Vertues*. And therefore as a Traveller towards Evening, mends his pace to his Inn, so ought we towards the Evening of our Days, to make the greater hast, and the rather, because there is a necessity if we would be happy, for our walking *humbly with God*. For that is the foundation of all

Of Mercy in Relieving the Poor.

Vertues (without which, they are but Glittering Sins.) It is the *Cement* of all Societies, in *Church* or *Common-wealth*; without this all our strongest Designs, and Models of Government, are but Castles built in the Air; and besides this, they that walk with God, have great Privileges. *They are new Creatures, living Stones, plants of God's right Hand, friends of Christ, a royal Priesthood, Children of Light, earthly Angels, Citizens of Heaven, and Cobeirs of Jesus Christ.* And Lastly, the Advantage of it is Inconceivable; for a Holy Life, has an Holy Death, and a good Conscience, and is followed with Eternal Glory. For as the Sun is not the higher for our gazing on't, nor the Fire the hotter for our going nearer to it, so *God* is not by our worshipping of him, made more Glorious, but we much more Happy. Why then, if the *Olympian* Combatants took such pains for a Garland of Flowers, or if *Aristotle* kept himself naked Night and Nay, with his Ball and copper Bason, that he might attain to a more exact knowledge in Philosophy: And if *Archimedes* was so taken up with drawing of his Mathematical Lines, that he was not aware of the Soldiers that knock't him on the Head; how much more ought we to sweat and toil for this Godliness, that brings us so mighty a reward in *this Life*, and an external weight of Glory in the *Life to come*. And from hence therefore you may see, how much

much they are deceived, who think that true Religion consists in Questions and Disputes, that limit Religion and Godliness to their being of the Church, or of this or that Communion. The Apostle St. James tells us otherwise, Chap. 1. 23. *If any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass, but straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.* I may say, he is like a Man delighted with sweet Perfumes, in a Perfumers Shop, but carries none away with him: Whereas, Religion must be a daily and constant Act, walking, as the Text tells you; we must serve God on *Work-days*, as well as on *Sundays* and Holydays. It must season all our Actions and Sufferings, when God corrects us; Godliness adds to our Fear, Reverence and Watchfulness, and makes us bow under his Rod; and it must be woven with all our Actions, for that enobles the basest Action, as the Sun does enlighten a dark Cloud. And thus *David's* dancing before the Ark of God, was legitimated by Religion for a noble Action, though in it self very mean. They are also deceived, who fancy that Religion consists in Ceremonies; for Superstition and Religion differ as widely, as Flattery and Friendship: The one is like a comely and grave Matron, adorned with decent and necessary Habiliments; and the other like a Curtisan. It is confest, that

Ceremonies ought to be like Leaves, to defend the tender Fruit from nipping Winds; but not so thick, as to hinder the Sun from ripening of them. And thus I am come from the *Duty to walk*, to the *manner* in Humility; which we must not only consider in particular, as it relates to the *Israelites* here in the Text: But in General, as it relates to all *Christians*, as it relates to the *Israelites*; we may infer, from considering the whole Scope of the Prophet, why *God* required *Humility* from them; that it was, because they began to be Proud, and High-minded, and to forget *God* that brought them out of *Egypt*, and led them in the *Wilderness*; and through their own Pride and Stiffness, began to make Gods to themselves, after the manner of the *Gentiles*, and to worship *Idols*; and therefore after *God* pleaded his Cause with them, and convinc'd them of their Folly and Ingratitude, of their Pride and Rebellion, he enjoyns them *Humility*, that is, to consider their own Nothingness, as else where he bids them *Look to the Pit whence they were taken, and the Rock whence they were hewn*; but as it relates to us *Christians*, it must reach further; for as the *Evangelical Law* has made a fuller discovery of our Duties, both as to the *Manner*, and the *End* of them, so it requires more perfect and greater degrees of Vertue: Inasmuch as the Service which the *Gospel* requires, is more Spiritual than what
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the Law do's exact; for under the *Law*, the *bowing of the head like a bulrush*, and the *walking softly*, and the *sprinkling with ashes*, (as in *Ahab*) was in some degree accepted; but under the *Gospel*, not only the outward shew of *Humility*, but also the inward *Meekness* and *Humility* of the Heart and Spirit is required; and therefore it was that our *Saviour* gave us so exact a Pattern, for that he bids *us learn of me, for I am humble and meek*: This Christian *Humility* therefore consists in a deep sense of our now *Unworthiness*, and of our *Inability* of doing any thing in it self acceptable to *God*, and in acknowledging all that we are to do, and have to proceed from the exuberance of *God's* Mercy and Bounty to us. And it must not only respect our Behaviour towards *God* himself, but also towards *Man*; because our Actions and Deportment towards one another, according to this Rule, do's immediately fulfil the Commands of *God*; and by their being ordered by Religion to his Glory, become also Pious. I will not now trouble you with telling you that this *Humility* should teach us to humble our selves under the *Cross*, to prefer others before our selves, to condescend to the meanest Offices and Services, for the promoting of *God's* Glory, and the Salvation of *Souls*; because all that, and more too, is understood by it. But I shall now make a short Repetition of what I delivered on this

Of Mercy in forgiving Enemies,

Subject : And *First*, then you may remember I told you, God had a Controversy with his People, wherein I observed the Parties, and the Proceedings ; the Parties were three. First, *God the Plaintiff*, Secondly, *Israel the Defendant*, and Thirdly, the *Mountains the Judges* ; In the Proceedings also I told you, there were three parts. First, *God's Plea*, a Plea of *Debt*, in the Verses 3, 4, 5. Secondly, *Israel's Answer*. Thirdly, *God's Replication* in my Text, *He hath shewed thee, O Man*. I gave you four Instance, wherein our case is parallel with the *Israelites* : I told you, *God* did three ways discover himself unto us, by the Book of *Nature*, by the Book of the *Creatures*, and by the Book of *God*. I prov'd to you, that the Bible was the Book of *God*, by its *Antiquity*, by its *Consent*, by the fulfilling of its *Prophecies*, by the testimony of the *Martyrs*, by the Judgments that fell upon those *Tyrants* that endeavour'd to suppress it ; and by that *Light* that shines to them, who with *Humility* read it, and *Devotion* pray to understand it, in order to their living according to it. I told you that *God* preferred *Justice*, before *Mercy*, to unmask *Hypocrisie*, and to shew that he is more sensible of the wrongs done to his *Servants*, than to himself. I told you, that *Justice* in a general Sense, did comprehend all *Vertues* ; and that *Justice* was a constant will of paying every man what is right, and that

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it was either *Publick* or *Private*, I told you that private *Justice* had two Parts. *First*, to wrong no Man by Fraud or Violence. *Secondly*, to give every Man his due; and more particularly, that there was a *Justice* from the Parent to the *Child*, and from the *Child* to the Parent; from the *Prince* to the *Subject*, and from the *Subject* to the *Prince*; from the *Minister* to his *Parishioners*; from the *Husband* to the *Wife*, and so on to all the *Relations* in the World; I told you, that general *Justice* was conversant about the general Good of the whole Community. I gave you some practical Inferences, wherein I shewed you, that Justice was not only to be observed in our Goods or Inheritance, but also in our good Name, and Credit, and Reputation, that is, not to bespatter any with Calumnies, and false Reports, ; and told you, that telling the truth it self with a mischievous Intention, in the Language of the *Scripture*, was to make a *Lie*, as in the case of *Doeg*: Then I proceeded to the second part of the Text, to *love Mercy*, and shewed you, why the Prophet said, to love *Mercy*, rather than to be Merciful. *First*, to direct our Affections to the right Object. *Secondly*, to shew that Charity should proceed from Conscience, and not from Vain-glory. *Thirdly*, that though a Man has not wherewithal to do acts of Mercy, yet he ought to have a Will, when God shall give him Ability. I
also

also told you, *Mercy* has two Parts, to *Give*, and *Forgive*; that to *Give*, respected the whole Posterity of *Adam* that are in Want; but especially the household of *Faith*: And that to *Forgive*, respected our Enemies, and such as Injure us. I told you, that *Alms-giving* is call'd *pure Religion* by *St. James*; for that it has (as all other Vertues) three Acts, *Elicit*, *External*, and *Imperat*; that is, when the Act of any other Vertue is order'd by Religion, to the Honour of God. I told you, that the Scripture do's promise more Rewards to *Alms-giving*, and enjoyns it more than any other Duty: I told you, that tho' they do not satisfie for Sin, that they are good Evidences, and Companions of true *Repentance*; and that there is a double satisfaction for Sin, the one of *Justice*, that is the Blood of *Christ*; the other of *Complacence*, by vertue of *God's Promise*, that is, *Works of Mercy*. I told you that every good *Work* was a *Seed of Glory*, and that *Alms-deed* did procure a reward not only in *this Life*, but also in the *Life to come*: And then I shewed you, that the object of our *Mercy* and *Charity*, is every one that stands in need of our help; under which Head, I told you the meaning of that Text, give a Portion to *Seven*, and also to *Eight*; to *Seven*, because the Wealthy *Jews* did maintain so many Poor, and to *Eight*, that is, to more than that Number; or to *Seven*, and to *Eight*, that is, both to

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Jew and Christian; the Jews observing the *Seventh Day* for their *Sabbath*, and the Christians the *Eighth*; or to *Seven*, that is, to *Many*, and to *Eight*, that is to *every one*, according to the Greek Proverb, πάντα ἔκτω, *Eight is all*. I answer'd, the several pretences used for not exercising of *Charity*, as that he is a *lewd Fellow*, that he is not able to requite me again, and that he is an *Enemy*; I told you there were two Cautions to be observed in dispersing of *Charity*. *First*, that we are more oblig'd to relieve our own *Poor*, than *Strangers*. *Secondly*, that we ought to distinguish between the impotent and able *Beggars*; and for the manner of our *Charity*, I gave you the example of the good *Samaritan*: He *first* pitied the wounded *Jew*. *Secondly*, he bound up his *Wounds*. *Thirdly*, he pours in *Wine* and *Oil*. *Fourthly*, he throws not away his *Money* *Profusely*, but gives him *two Pence*; which shews, that in our *Charity* we ought not to *ease* others, as to *streighten* and *burthen* our selves; Tho' we ought in this time of *Lent*, especially to spare upon our selves, to give to the *Poor*. And *Lastly*, he do's all this freely, without pressing upon the *Necessities* of the *Indigent Person*. And now this day I treated of the other *Act of Mercy*, to *forgive* our *Enemies*, and gave you several reasons for it; and that we must so *forgive*, as to *forget*, and to do good unto them. And of the last Particular

lar in the Text, *To walk humbly with thy God*; I told you of the Duty to *Walk*, which was a proficiency in Religion, and a pressing forward towards the mark of our high Calling, and of the manner in *Humility*, as it related to the *Jews* here in the Text, and to all *Christians* in General. I shall not trouble you with any farther Repetition, but earnestly beseech you to consider, that hearing of Sermons is not the thing that will carry you to *Heaven*, no, nor knowing the Will of *God*, but the doing of *it*: And therefore examine your selves, and see what you have profited by this whole Discourse; see whether you have stedfastly resolved to *do justly*, to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly with thy God*: Believe me if you have not, it were better for you, that you had never heard of these Duties; because being told of these things, and not being benefited by them, will both aggravate your Sin, and enhance your Punishment. And therefore I once more passionately beseech you, to consider how sad a thing it is to despise the Riches of *God's Goodness*, and long *Suffering*, which ought to lead you to Repentance; and while it is to Day, resolve to mend your *Lives*, and to repent of what is past, lest *God* pronounce that dreadful Sentence, which he did once against the *Jews*: *Behold the Despisers, and wonder and Perish*. There is not any of you, that dislike the Sermon, that will not answer the Preacher;
but

but if you like it, and do not improve by it, you condemn your selves ; because by your Approbation, you own that you ought to receive Advantage and Improvement by it. Let us not therefore be like mangy Jades that love to be rubb'd, because it eases them for the present ; but let us so approve of what we hear, as not only to be pleased with it for the present, but to receive benefit by it for the future ; if you do this, your Labour is not lost, for *God* will reward it. *Secondly*, Since *God* has shewed every Man what he requires of him, let none of us pretend Ignorance. If thou canst not read the *Scriptures*, thou hast the Book of *Nature* within thee, to lead thee to the knowledge of *God*, that is, the light of thine own *Reason* and *Conscience*. And if thou hast cast that into a *Lethargy* by Excess, and inordinate Courses, yet you have the Book of the *Creatures* to direct you. *Secondly*, since *God* has shewed what he requires of thee, let this teach thee to make the revealed Will of *God*, the Rule of all thy Actions, and not to fly to his Secret and conceal'd Will. Do thou what *God* has required of thee, and leave the event to himself : for us to begin at *Heaven*, and to conclude at *Earth*, is like beginning at the wrong end of the Ladder to go upwards, instead of the right. *Thirdly*, Let this teach you to take heed of *Will-worship*, for the Rule of our *Faith*, and the man-

manner of Worship, are contain'd in the *Scripture*, as to the Substance of it. Let that be our *Guide*, least God tells us, *in vain do ye worship me, teaching for Doctrine the Precepts of Men*. Consider this destroyed *Nadab, Abihu* and *Gideon*; but yet this does not hinder Men from making Canons, Constitutions, and instituting of Ceremonies for Order and Decency in the *Church*; for he that said, *Let all things be done decently and in order*, did not thereby deny the *Scripture* to be perfect in revealing of *Supernatural Truths*; nor deny a Power to the *Church*, to appoint certain Forms of serving *God*; provided those forms do not thwart or overthrow the reveal'd word of *God*. To conclude in a word, Let all of us this very Instant, resolve to observe and practise what is consonant to the Will of *God*. If we do this, we shall not be only just to God and our Neighbours, but also to our selves; and at last receive that Crown of Righteousness, which God the Righteous Judge has prepared for them that obey his Will: Which may we all do, and obtain, for the Merits of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, be all Power and Glory, *Amen*.

DISCOURSE V.

Of the Original of the World.

ACTS XVII. 24, 25.

God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made of hands, neither is worshipped with Men's hands, as though he needeth any thing, seeing he giveth unto all life and breath, and all things.

THough all Men acknowledge in the gross that there is a God; yet Sin has so much darkned their Understanding, that many by their false Conceptions of him, do implicitly deny what they openly profess: And therefore because a right knowledge of God, does not only inform the Mind with true Opinions concerning him, but also serves to direct our Practice in the right means and manner of his Service, and
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*In the Dis-
course of
Superstition,
Printed
by mistake
in the first
Volume.

to correct Abuses in his Worship. Therefore I say, the *Apostle* begins in his *Apology*, with that, you have already heard his *Representation*, * and the reason of it. And now we come to speak of his *Information* in the words of the Text, which contain an *Instruction* touching God himself, and in the rest to the 29th Verse, with Reference to Man. The *First* Affirmatively declaring what he is by his Works, in these words, *God that made the world, and all things therein*. And *Secondly*, by his Possession and Lordship over the World, in these words, *Seeing he is Lord of Heaven and Earth*. Then *Negatively* in these words, *First, He dwelleth not in temples made with hands*: And *Secondly, Is not worshipped with mens hands*, and that proved by two Reasons; for if so, he would need something from us. *Secondly, He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*. And in this Doctrine concerning God, the true grounds of worshipping God aright are laid down; therefore give me leave to use that to you, which God said to *Job*, *Gird up thy self like a man*. Let us gird up the Loins of our Minds, and learn the knowledge of God, that so we may know how to worship him as he ought. And for your better understanding of what shall be delivered, I will begin with the affirmative *Instruction* concerning God, which was the first thing in the Text, declaring him by his Work, *God that made*

made the world, and all things therein. I shall not need to spend time in expounding the words, only premise this to you, that some as *Beza* reads, *The God which made the world*, which distinguishes him as the true *God*, from all other imagined and false Gods by way of Excellency, and affords this Conclusion; that the World, that is the great frame of Heaven and Earth, and all within their Circumference, had a Beginning, and were made by *God*: And the *Apostle* does on purpose use these words, to divide the two Sects of Philosophers, that were his Adversaries; that is, *Epicureans*, and the followers of *Aristotle*, who made the *World* to be *Eternal*: And the *Stoicks*, and the rest of *Plato's* Scholars, who held that the *World* had a Beginning; therefore he attempts not to prove it, but takes it as granted for the present. And truly, if he had gone about to prove it, he must have used other Arguments than the *Scripture*; because though that is sufficient to convince *Christians* that believe it, yet not to satisfy those that deny the *Scriptures*, *Reason* must be the only proof to them, and that does clearly shew, that the *World* had a Beginning: For *Philosophy* tells us, that all things that consist of Matter and Form, must have an efficient to set them together. And in Causes we must come to the first, Secondly, because all things are destinated to their proper ends, and serve for such excel-

lent uses, that there must be some wise *Efficient* to dispose them to their several Stations, otherwise all things would run into Confusion. And hence a Caufer and Maker is prov'd, as he that comes into a well-built House, understands the Skill of the *Artificer*, and his Intention. Thirdly, The *World* must have a *Maker*, because all *Motion* is founded upon something that is *Immoveable*; and the Ornament and Beauty of the *World*, shews it to be a work of an unerring Intelligence: And therefore it is impossible, that all these things which we see, concur to one general end, though in themselves so seemingly different, should come by *chance*, as the *Epicureans* held, and as our modern *Atheists* would have it. For if so, nothing would be perfect or permanent, but subject to the power of *Chance* and *Accidents*: And if they allow, as some do (who are unwilling to say there is a God in plain terms) that they came together by Nature; if they meant by Nature, a living, unerring, understanding, wise *Power*, that is the *God* we contend for; if not, it is but a cloak of Ignorance, a thing of mere Title, a Name without a Being; but these Arguments are of no use to us that allow the *Scriptures*, which tell us plainly how, when, and for what ends God made the *World* for his *Glory* and his *Throne*: Neither will it follow from hence, that God had neither *Throne* nor *Glory* before he made the *World*,
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for he was ever the same; but he hath by making the *World*, shewed and declared more, as he that exercises his Skill, or his Power, and Wealth, has no more than he had, but he shews more. Neither was he *idle* before he made the *World*: For the Blessed Trinity was ever Glorious, John 17. 5. *Father glorifie me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was;* and Prov. 8. 29, 30. *When he appointed the foundation of the earth, then was I by him, as one brought up with him, I was daily his delight, rejoycing always before him:* The uncreated wisdom was the Father's Delight, and the Contemplation of his own Essence, was a pleasure beyond Conception; and he before the *World* was, decreed all things that were since created: and among other things, prepared a Hell for presumptuous Questioners. And this gives me way to speak to the second thing in the Affirmation of him, that is, that all things are in the Possession and Lordship of God, in these words, *Seeing he is Lord of Heaven and Earth*, that is, Possessor of them, as being his by right of Creation and Dominion, Psal. 24. *The earth is the Lord's and all that is therein,* and Psal. 100. *The sea is his, for he made it.* Hence then we are taught, that since God is *Lord*, and Possessor of the *World*, that we cannot challenge any part of it of right, but have all we enjoy of his Grace and Bounty; And therefore should ra-

ther endeavour to secure that Portion we possess already, or shall hereafter acquire, by receiving it thankfully, as his free Gift, than by such unlawful means, as the Men of the World use to provoke God to dispossess us of it. Certainly they that stick at nothing, be it never so unlawful, to acquire large Possessions here, that Lie and Cheat, Oppress, *and grind the face of the poor, and regard not the cries of the widows and oppress'd*, do either not consider that these things which they thus strive for, are God's own Possession; or that whilst they use these unlawful means to acquire them, they commit, as it were, a forcible entry upon God Almighty, and endeavour to *cut him* of his *Inheritance*. *Secondly*, from hence we are taught not to Murmur or Repine at our Condition; for since all is God's, and that not any of us is any more than a Tenant, to be turned out of our Possession whenever our Landlord thinks fit: And whilst he is pleased to trust us with any portion of these his Possessions, we ought to dispose of them as faithful Stewards, according to his Directions, that is, to relieve the *Necessitous*, and to do works of *Charity*; and by that means, we shall not only secure a temporal Possession for our selves, but also provide one that is eternal in the Heavens. *Thirdly*, Since God has made the *World*, and all things therein, this ought to put us in mind of his Greatness, and to beget in us
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lutable Apprehensions, and to consider the works of his Hands ; that in them we might acknowledge the Power and Glory of the Maker, and our own Nothingness. And *Psal.* 8. 3. *When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man? that thou art mindful of him.* Fourthly, The Consideration of his Power and Wisdom, which he has manifested in creating the *World*, ought to make us fear and tremble at his Greatness. The Lord is a true God, he is the *living God*, and an *everlasting King*, at his mouth the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation. Fifthly, this ought to perswade us to put our trust in him, for it is he only can deliver us, and help us in spight of all Opposition; and it is he that can make us happy, when all worldly Contentments are wanting: For *Psal.* 146. *Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his hope, that is, the Anchor that cannot be forc't from its Hold,* by all the Storms and Billows of Affliction, nor by the joint endeavours of the Devil, and all the wicked Men in the *World*. Lastly, this should teach us to obey, and serve this great Creator, and Lord of the *World*; for if it be not in his power to reward us, as Balac said to Baalam, *Look to the earth, and the fulness thereof, and the Heaven of Heaven.* All these are our Lord's, and therefore we cannot want Rewards, if we be by Obedi-

ence, and an Holy Life in his Favour. This is the true Religion, and in this let us exercise our selves; for the end of our coming hither, is not only Hearing, or delighting in the things we hear, but doing what we are taught. And this brings me from the *Affirmative Instruction* which the *Apostles* gives of *God*, and was the first thing in the Text, whereby he shews what *God* is, by his Works *made the World*, and by his Possession *he is Lord and possessor of all*. To the Second thing in the Text, to wit, his *Negative Instruction* concerning *God*; *He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with mens hands*: So then hitherto you have heard what the *Apostle* reports of *God*, and now we are to see what he denies of him; and that we may not inconsiderately rush into it, some few things in the words may not be unfitly examined: He says first, that *God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with mens hands*; which must be understood as a borrowed Speech from Human Life: Because a *Possessor*, be it of little or much, dwelleth in some certain place where he is circumscrib'd; and accordingly the *Heathens* made their imagined *Gods* to dwell in some City or *Temple*, which they preferred above the rest: This the *Apostle* with *St. Stephen's* words used before Chap. 7. Ver. 49. *Neither worshipt with Mens hands*. The Greek word is *served with*

with men's hands. The meaning of this may appear by the 29th Verse, the Art and Device executed by the Hand, he means that of Imagery, and the like, Chap. 19. 26. *They are no Gods that are made with hands.* It is first (if I forget not) used by *Moses*, I know, saith he, *That after my death, you will provoke the Lord with the works of your hands,* Deut. 31. 29. As in the Song which he puts into their Mouths in the next Chapter is expressed, and so *Psal. 115.* *The idols of the Heathens, are said to be the work of mens hands.* And so *St. Stephen* speaking in the Seventh of *Acts*, of the Idol made by the *Israelites*, saith, *They rejoyced in the works of their own hands;* and without doubt, *St. Paul* would have spoken plainly to them, but that he would first wisely lay the grounds upon which he would build more, before he dis-stated them. These words then thus expounded, contain two *Affertions*, with their proof leading to an Absurdity. The *First* concerning *God's Habitation*; the *Second*, concerning his *Worship*. The *First*, *God dwelleth not in temples made with hands;* and against this the *Temple* of *Jerusalem* may be objected, which is called the *House of God*. And *Christ* himself out of the Prophet saith, *My house shall be called the house of Prayer.* These Speeches you must understand, are spoken by way of Excess; and not properly to endear us to such places as *St. Stephen*

shews out of the Prophet *Isaiab*, Chap. 66.1. *The heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool, where is the house that you will build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?* But properly it was the House where God's Name dwelt; and as King's date from their *Palaces* and *Courts*, though they do not live in them; so the same thing is to be understood of our Churches, which we call as they are indeed, the Houses of God: Yet we must not think God dwells in them so Circumscriptively, as that he is not also every where, even in our private Houses; for his Presence is *in*, and *throughout* the whole *Universe*. And notwithstanding this, they ought to be decently and reverently adorned; for if there be any *House of God* among Men, or any *Heaven* upon Earth, it is the *Church*, which is consecrated to that purpose, which is the place appointed by *God himself*; in as much as it is by them that are in Authority, to be the place of worshipping him, and therefore we ought to assemble to them: For certainly that place which God has appointed for his own *Worship*, is the likeliest for us to find a blessing *in*. And therefore, though we ought not to neglect it, yet we must take heed of limiting God so, to those publick places, as to think that when we are lawfully hindered from coming to them, that we may not find a blessing out of them; for *David* tells in the 139. *Psal.* that *God is every where,*

where, and his Presence is with us in the *Darkness of the night, and the light of the morning*; and that if we make our bed in hell it self, there he is with us also. And therefore as from hence we may learn, to put a right value upon *Church-Devotion*, which God himself takes notice of in a *Pharisee* and a *Publican*, and rewards it too; so on the other hand, we must not be dejected, and think we cannot have the benefit of our Prayers and Services, when we are hindred from frequenting these *places*, and forc't to worship God in private, which happens sometimes either by Sickness, or some unavoidable occasion; for a true *Christian* is never without a *Temple*, wherein he may worship God, as he himself implies, where he protests against *Temples made with hands*, *Isaiah 66. 2. Where is the house that ye build to me, and where is the place of my rest, for all these things hath my hand made? but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*: But then we must be sure to take these cautions along with us. *First*, that we prefer the place of God's publick Worship ordained by Authority, to our own private Choice, not only because it is commanded, and better fitted for his Service; but also, because in an ordinary way, we may be partakers of the Prayers of the whole Congregation; wherein there being some good Persons, our own
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Personal Wickedness, may not deprive us of sharing in the benefit of their Prayers: For you know, that a few righteous Persons, such as *Lot*, would have saved *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* from ruin. Secondly, Be sure that we come to this place of publick Worship, as often as we can: And here I could wish I had not too just cause to reprove you for your remissness in coming; I design not to particularize any, but I have cause to believe that many of us, upon very trivial Occasions stay at home, or do worse, when we should come hither to serve God. I hope there is not any of you so great an enemy to your selves, that because you have (perhaps) a picque at your Ministers, you will therefore quarrel with, and neglect the Ordinances; as it is not good in *St. Paul's* own Opinion, to have respect of *Persons* in hearing of *God's* word, so I am certain, it is worse to have no respect to the *Doctrine*; because we have a prejudice to the *Person* that delivers it. The Mysteries of *God* are pure in themselves, and cannot be tainted by the personal failings and infirmities of the *dispraisers* of them. And this brings me to the second thing in the Negative Instruction of *God*, in these words, *Neither is he served with the works of mens hands, as though he needeth any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.* And this may seem something strange, that *God* that has capacitated and enabled Man

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to do excellent things, should not be served by his Handy-work, especially since none can doubt, but that God was served by the *Tabernacle*, which was made by *Bezaliel* and *Aboliab*, and by the *Temple*, and the *Sacrifices*, and the *Ark of the Covenant*. In answer to this, you must know that God was not properly worshipt by these, because they were only certain signs and means of Worship, but the Worship it self was to be spiritual and reasonable too, *Rom. 12. 1.* Secondly, whatsoever is *devised* by *Man* as a Worship, or a means of Worship, is *Will-worship* and abominable to God, and such are *Images*, which are utterly unlawful. I know the *Papists* (the great Patrons of Images) use two starting holes to avoid this Censure. *First*, they say, that those Texts that condemn Images, speaks of the Idols of the *Gentiles*, which are Images of false Gods; but in answer to this, I grant that tho' most places of *Scripture* do so; yet some are expresse against making of Images of the true God, as the second Commandment: And *Deut. 4. 15.* *Take ye therefore good heed, for you saw no manner of Similitude in the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest you corrupt your selves, and make you a graven Image.* And the Image erected by *Aron* to *Jehovah*, *Exodus 32.* intended by the People; for the God that brought them out of *Egypt*, *St. Stephen* calls an *Idol*; and

and sets out with this Name, usually attributed to the Heathen *Idols*, *They rejoyced in the works of their own hands*. And sure the God that made Heaven and Earth, that is *Lord of all*, is he that is here spoken of; and if we believe the *Text*, *He is not worshipped with mens hands*, as St. *Ambrose* says in answer to *Symmachus*, *non vult se Deus in lapidibus coli*, God will not be worshipped by Stones. And therefore we may assert, not by his Images of Wood or Brass. Their second Evasion is, that the Scriptures against *Images*, speak only against them that did worship the *Images* themselves for *Gods*, and not *God* by them. And this is as vain as the former, for the *Israelites* did so worship *Jehovah*; for certainly no Man can be so senseless, as to think they believed that the *Ear-Rings* borrowed from the *Egyptians*, had brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*. Or can any one imagine, that *Jeroboam*, whose Idolatry was of the like sort, would in policy go about to perswade the People, that his *Calves* were *Gods*: He did not design to innovate any thing in the final object of their worship, but in the means only, least the People should have you go up to *Jerusalem*, to the Temple: *Isaiah* speaks Chap. 40. 60. *Of the similitude of Gods*, which shews, that they were never understood to be really *Gods*: And the very *Pagans* themselves, (except such as were very simple, and in a manner *Idiots*) thought not the *Ima-*

ges which themselves made, to be *Gods*. *Celsus* as appears by *Origen*, in his seventh Book against him, scorns they should be so sottish ; but when the Honour and Reverence due to the true God, was communicated to them, the *Christians* (and that according to the *Scripture Phrase*) calls them their *Gods*, *Psal.* 115. and *Moses* speaks of *Israel's Idolatry*, to forbear all other Proofs. We have God's exprefs Prohibition in the *Second Commandment*, which ought to satisfie any one ; besides, it fills Men's Heads with false Notions of *God*, and is a ready way to that brutish worshipping of *Flocks* and *Stones*. Whilst the busie mind is not able to judge, nor cannot easily conceive the Distinctions they give of the *Type*, and the *Original*, *terminated* and *conveyed Worship*, and such other Niceties of the *Schools*. Let us therefore keep our selves from these *Idols*, as *St. John* exhorts ; and the rather, because the Text tells us, that God needs nothing of ours to his Worship and Service, *Seeing he gives to all life and breath, and all things*, which certainly is a fit Consideration, to keep us in a moderate and humble opinion of all our own Services ; *For when we have done all we can, we have done but our duties*, since it is he that gives us *life and breath, and all things*. And thus have I spoken what I designed at this time, and shew you how *St. Paul* performed his Promise in instructing the *Athenians*, in the know-

knowledge of the true God, in the words of the Text, which I told you he did. *First, Affirmatively* from his Works, *he made the World. Secondly, from his Possession, he was Lord of the world.* I told you, that Reason, and not Scripture, must convince such as do not own the Sacred Oracles, that God made the World, and I gave you several Arguments to prove it by. *First*, That all things that consist of Matter and Form, must have an efficient to set them together. And *Secondly*, In Causes we must come to the first; all things were destin'd to their end, and therefore something must have the disposing of them. *Thirdly*, The *World* must have a Maker, because all Motion is founded upon something immoveable: And therefore it is impossible, that this Concurrence of all Creatures to their ends, should come by Chance or *Nature*, unless they mean by it, an unerring Intelligence, which is the same thing with the God we contend for. I told you, that God did not acquire more Power and Glory by making the World, than he had before, but that he shewed more; and that before he made the World, he decreed all things that were made, and prepared an *Hell* for curious questionists. I told you also, from the second thing in the *Affirmation* of him, which was his Possession, in being *Lord of the world. First*, that we cannot challenge any part of it of right, but of mere Grace. *Secondly*, That we ought
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Of the Original of the World.

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to be content with our Condition, because all is God's; and he may as freely take from us, as he gives to us. *Thirdly*, That it ought to put us in mind of his Greatness, and cause us to have futable apprehensions of him; and that we ought to put our trust in him, because he has power to deliver us in spite of all Opposition: And *Lastly*, it should teach us to serve and obey him, because he made us, and we are his, and not our own. I told you, from his Negative Instruction of God, which was Two-fold. *First*, that *He did not dwell in temples made with hands*, and that *my house shall be called the house of prayer*, was spoken by way of Endearment, to engage People to frequent it; and not properly, yet that because it was the place where God's Name dwelt, that we should adorn and beautifie our *Churches*, and frequent them, unless hinder'd by Sicknes or otherwise; and yet that we must not so limit God's presence to our *Churches*, as to think that we may not meet with *God's Blessing* elsewhere, when we are necessarily hindred from repairing to them; in such cases every true *Christian* is a *Temple* to the Lord. I also gave you two Cautions. *First*, That we always prefer the publick place of God's Worship, to our own particular Choice or Fancy. *Secondly*, That we frequent these publick places of Worship, as often as we can; and not suffer our private Quarrels or Animosities against the Minister,

nister, to keep us from the Church. And from the second thing in the Negative Instruction of God, *That he is not served with mens hands*. I told you, that the *Tabernacle* made by *Bezaliel* and *Aholiab*, were rather the means and signs of *God's Worship*, than the *Worship* it self, which was to be *Spiritual*. Secondly, I told you, that whatever was devised by Man, as a means of *Worship*, was *Will-worship* and *Abominable to God*: And therefore that worshipping him by *Images*, was unlawful; because, that not only the *Images* of false Gods were forbidnen, but of the true God also, as in the Second Commandment, and here in the Text: And that not only the worshipping of the *Images* themselves, but *God* by them were prohibited; for so did the *Israelites* worship their *Calf*. And *Jeroboam* did not alter any thing in the final object of their *Worship*; but in the means, lest the People should go up to the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*. And that it did beget false Conceptions of God in Men, and that they were not able to distinguish between the *Type* and the *Original*, and *terminated* and *conveyed* *Worship*, and such other necessities of the Schools. And now I shall wind up all with this short Application: And *First*, That we give God our hearty thanks for freeing us from the *Idolatry* that our Fore-fathers lived in, and giving us a clear knowledge of himself; and prescribing a way for his *Worship*,

ship, and endeavour to live answerable thereunto. *Secondly*, That we take heed, that we set not up *Idols* of our own inventing, by serving him according to our idle fancies; which if we once suffer to prevail with us, will soon lead us into as great Absurdities, as the *Athenians* were guilty of. And since every one of us, cannot be able to dive into the depth of things, the only way to prevent our being misled, is to stick to that form and manner that *Christ* himself has prescribed, and the *Church* has preserved for us, and daily declares unto us. Beware therefore of new Lights, and follow not Strangers, whose Principles you know not; or if you did, perhaps you are not able to judge of. And be confident, you cannot have so great Security for your being rightly instructed by any, as by those whom the Laws have appointed for your Pastors and Teachers: And therefore for the love of God, until you be convinc'd that they misguide you, do not forsake them; but sadly consider, what answer you will give to God Almighty at the day of Judgment, when he shall charge you with wilful Schism. Believe it, no Man, that tears the seamless Coat of *Christ*, shall escape his wrath at that day. And *Lastly*, Since the Text tells you, *That he gives us life, and breath, and all things*: Let our *life* out of Gratitude be spent to his *Glory*, and our *breath* to his *Praise*; and if it shall be his pleasure

to do us the *honour* to call us to suffer for him. Let us with *Joy* spend our Life, and last breath for his Name; and let us return all we have to his Service that gave it; for we should be unworthy of the least good, if having received it from God, we should employ it against so merciful and bountiful a Patron and Benefactor. To whom with the Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons, and one only God, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE. VI.

Of the Original and Pedigree of Man.

ACTS XVII. 26, 27.

And hath made of one blood, all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.

YOU may remember I have hitherto discoursed of St. Paul's Behaviour in his Disputation with the *Philosophers* in *Athens*, and dispatcht both his Reprehension and Reason; as also his informing them of the true God, both Affirmatively and Negatively, by telling them, *That he made the world, and that he dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with the works of mens hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things.* And in the words now read unto you, of which I intend to speak at this time, without Repetition of any part of what I formerly delivered: The *Apostle*

proceeds in a further declaring of *God* unto them, by descending from a general Description of him in his creating the *World*, to a particular describing of him, by his creating of *Man* in the words of the Text, *And hath made of one blood*. To begin then, I desire you to take notice, that there are two fountains from which all true Religion does flow, *The knowledge of God, and of our selves*; and these two are so neerly joyned, that there is an easie passage from one to the other: For from *God* we easily descend to our selves, as his *Work*, and from *Man* we easily ascend from our selves to God, as our *Maker* and *End*.

And this is the reason of the *Apostle's* method in his Discourse, especially here, since he did not design as a *Philosopher*, to rest in the bare Contemplation of God, by the light of Nature; but as an *Apostle* with Reason, assisted by Grace, to bring Men to Obedience, in order to their being Happy, which was the ultimate end that *God* designed for them; and having received such a Commission and Ministry, to persuade them to be reconciled to *God*. This part of *St. Paul's* Speech, may be called the *History of Man*; from which every one may learn his own *Pedigree*, which if seriously reflected on, will cool those high Imaginations which we usually have of our own Worth and Independency; and observes with what great prudence he delivers himself in this Affair, in
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part reforming *Philosophy*, and confuting the Errors of the Professors of it ; who held, that Man had another *Original* than *God*, and in part, prudently holding his Hearers in suspense, with what the end of his Speech should be, thereby gaining the advantage of having the opportunity of insinuating his Intentions unto them ; which once done, they could not have the opportunity or power to resist. Before I come to speak particularly of the words, by way of Inference, I shall premise a short Exposition of them ; where it is said in our Translation, *That made of one blood* ; the vulgar has it only of *one*, without *blood*, referring it to one Man, to wit, *Adam* : But the *Greek* has it of *one blood*, which *Beza* also shews. And so the *Syriac*, and the *Latin*, and the *English* has it, *All Nations of Men* : Now if it be understood according to the former, *the Apostles* meaning was, to unite them together, whom custom had severed into many Nations ; which he does also, by shewing the Community of their Blood deriv'd from *Adam*, either *he hath made to dwell*, or that he might dwell upon *the face of the Earth*, the *Hebrew* expresses it all over, *East, West, North, and South*, Gen. 6. 7. *I will destroy man from off the face of the earth.* *Determined*, that is, bounded the *times*, that is, the Seasons and Periods of things are so limited, that they shall not exceed the time that God has so appointed ; for he has limited the periods of Kingdoms and Common-

wealths. So that their prospering and decaying, their Death and Resurrections, are by his Determining; and he has also limited the Law of *Nature*, of *Moses*, and the *Gospel*; so that nothing of what is done in the great *Chaos* of the World, is by Chance or Nature, as some of the Philosophers held; but by the Fore-knowledge and Ordination of God, *That they should seek him*; this is added, as if the Apostle should say, *therefore did God set them over the face of the earth, that they might seek God*; that is, labour to know him more perfectly, and worship him more devoutly: The like Phrase you have in *Deut. 4. 29. But from hence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thine heart, and all thy soul*; and the like also you have, *1 Chron. 15. 13. For we sought not the Lord after the due order*; and so *Psal. 104. Seek the Lord and his strength, and I say, seek the Lord while he may be found*: He that seeks, must not be utterly ignorant, or else how shall he know when he finds? Neither must he be perfectly knowing, or else what is it he looks for; if *perhaps*, that is, if so be, *they might feel after*, that is, a term borrowed from blind Men, that grope and feel for what they would find; which did argue the blindness of these *Athenians*, as to Spiritual things. This word is used by the *Septuagint*, and *Isaack* said unto *Jacob*, *Come near I pray, that I may feel thee*; and *Isa. 59. 10. and Luke 24. 39. Behold my hands and my feet, handle*

me, and see, and 1 John 1. 1. *Our hands have felt*: In this Text then, we have a Description of Mankind. *First*, By his *Maker*. *Secondly*, By his *Matter* and Manner of making of one Blood. *Thirdly*, By his *Place*, the face of the earth. And *Lastly*, By his *End* to seek God. *First*, Of the *first*, his *Maker*; here it may be demanded, why the Apostle tells us again, of the making of *Man*, seeing he said in the former verse, that God made all, which also includes the making of Man; to which it may be answered, that what he spoke before in general, was rather spoken for describing the Majesty of God, who had by being Creator of all, a right of *Dominion* over, and *Propriety* in all: But this is spoken for setting forth Man's more immediate and particular dependance upon God, for general things do not so nearly touch, as particulars; and things that are specially spoken, do beget another, and a more convincing manner of Knowledge. And therefore it touches us more with a Sence of our dependance upon God, that he says, he made all *Mankind*, that is, all *Nations*, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *you* and *me* in Particular, than in saying, *he made all things*; from all which thus put together, we may gain this *Conclusion*, *That God has made us, and not we our selves; and therefore we are the work of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture*. And since we are his, we have not the disposal of our selves, but we are to be acted and commanded by him; and cannot without an en-

creachment upon his Right, either rashly, or madly lay down that life which he gave us, until he calls upon us for it. And this the *Apostle* seems to insinuate to these very *Athenians*, who were apt upon any trivial occasion to destroy themselves; which though it was accounted as a piece of Gallantry in those days, was certainly a robbing of God Almighty of his Right of disposing of his own, and the denying his Providence. I wish there were not too many now-adays, that own not only *God* for their *Maker*, but *Christ* for their *Redeemer*; that tread in the same steps with these *Heathens*, who not only through inconsiderateness and rashness, make themselves away, by running into needless dangers, but also seek for occasion to destroy themselves; and are apt upon every idle word, or slight affront, (which perhaps was not really so intended) to seek for new methods of making themselves away; and not only rob God of themselves, but of others too in their fury and madness. And believe it, tho' this is so notorious, that without giving it a plainer Name, it is understood by all; yet there is a more seemingly indirect way of destroying our selves, than this, which perhaps is not so much taken notice of, yet is altogether as injurious and offensive to God, as the former; nay, rather more offensive, in that the inadvertency and passion that occasions the one, and therefore do's in some measure lessen the malice of it (as Man-slaughter is a less Sin than

than Murther ; for that the one is premeditated, and the other is not) does not accompany the other way ; and that is our Debauchery and Uncleanneſs, by which we contract divers incurable Diſeaſes ; certainly our great Maker deſign'd us for other ends. *Secondly*, Since God is our Maker, and as that hinders us from diſpoſing of our ſelves, otherwiſe than he Commands ; ſo it ought to make us willing, and ready to lay down our Lives when he calls for them. And this is one of the higheſt pieces of Chriſtian Magnanimity, that can be imagined, to part with what we have received, as freely as if it was given to us : But then for the knowing when, and where to do this, you muſt know, that it is then lawful for you to part with your Lives, and that willingly too, when you are called upon by thoſe whom God has ſet over you, to encounter a public Enemy, or to defend their juſt Rights, or when we are ſeized upon by Sickneſs, which we have not drawn upon our ſelves by Debauchery and Exceſs ; but riſes from the Conſtitution of our Bodies, or the infection of the Air, or other outward Accidents, which we could neither foreſee, nor prevent. And when we have uſed all lawful means for our recovery, when the former happens, and the latter does not prevent them, we are to reſign our ſelves freely and willingly, to the pleaſure of our great Maſter. And this leads to the ſecond thing in the Text, to wit, the *matter*
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of which we were made of *one Blood*. The *Original* of Nations among the *Ancients* was very obscure; and as their knowledge and ignorance of God increased or decreased, so they knew more or less of Man's *Original*; some thought they sprung out of the Soil it self, as these *Athenians*, and therefore boasted of their great Nobility, and brag'd, that their Progenitors had as early a beginning as the Earth; others who acquired some little glimmerings of Light from their converse with some of the Books of *Moses*, did believe, (though after an obscure manner) that they were made by *God*; and others, as *Democritus*, that they were the Product of an innumerable company of *Atoms*, fortuitously jumbled together, as the World it self was. But *St. Paul* undeceives these *Athenians*, by shewing them the true *Original* of Mankind; that they were of one Blood in *Adam* and *Noah*, and of one Man at first: And therefore in such a short Speech, it was not likely that he would enter into unnecessary Points, and catch at the Clouds; but he touches at what might prove his main Design, which was, informing the *Athenians* of the true God, and consequently the bringing them off from their *Idolatry*: And therefore he insists upon this, to reduce the *Athenians* to a more humble and modest Opinion of themselves. For they were swell'd with such high thoughts of themselves, that they esteemed themselves the only People of the World,
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both for Learning, Blood, Parts, Arms, and Civility, and despised all the rest of the World besides the *Grecians*, as barbarous, and made the Drossier, and less refined parts of the Earth. And thence it was that they were wedded to their own Inventions, Customs, and Religions, and Opinions, and accounted them the best. And hence *St. Paul* had the harder task to bring them off from their *Idolatry, To the knowledge of the true God.* Secondly, The *Apostle* insists upon this, to take down the pride of the *Jews*, who judged themselves better than other Nations, and scorned to be equal with such Sinners as the *Gentiles*; and this he might more convincingly press to the *Jews*, than to the *Athenians*, by bringing them to the Books of *Moses*, which they own'd did contain the History of Man's Original. *First*, Then from hence we may infer, that as any Country encreases in Civility, Power, Riches and Inventions, so they grow the haughtier, and despise others. And that's the reason why some Nations now in *Christendom*, who were formerly valued for their Learning and Gallantry, are vilified and despised; but this is not the humour of Countries only, but of particular Persons, and their Descendants; for they think their Nobility and Parts, but an advantage of higher Ground to despise others, which is a very childish and weak Opinion, especially among *Christians*, who are only better or worse than others; by how much

much more or less agreeable their Actions are to their Profession. Therefore let none of us think the better of our selves for these things, for God tells the *Israelites*, *Deut. 4. 38.* That he drove out Nations mightier than they were ; which certainly could have pretended to as Ancient Blood, and much greater Possessions than they could. It is confest, that God himself made a distinction among the Tribes, and in all Ages, and all Nations, Noble and Ancient Families have been prefer'd to the upstart and mean ; but this only is of worldly advantage to them, but not of any other, unless that, as they are plac'd above their ordinary Rank, their vertuous and noble Actions, which gave the first rise to Families, be agreeable to their Titles and Stations in the World. *Secondly*, If you have Nobility, Wit and Parts, and Riches, do not condemn another, how mean soever : But consider by how much you exceed others, by so much the more you are beholding to God that made the difference ; and labour to add *Humility* to your other Qualifications, or else they signifie so little, that you are the worse for them. For the Prince and the Peasant, the Great and the Mean, the Noble and Ignoble, the Rich and the Poor, *are all of one Blood* : And oftentimes it is the pleasure of Men that makes the Distinction, more than their own personal Merit or Demerit, they are all of them *Wheat or Chaff* ; *It is God, and not we, that must win-*

now them ; for he is their maker, all out of one matter, and one blood. Thirdly, From hence we ought to learn to love one another, to bear with each others Infirmities, nay, to be kind and merciful to the Strangers, *Deut.* 8. 19. *For he is thy kinsman.* You must endeavour to procure good for every Man, as he is a Man ; to pray for him , as now for the *Jews*, but much more for the *Christians*, of what Nation or Country soever. And this brings me to the *Third thing* in the Text, to wit, the *Place upon the face of the earth*, from whence we may learn. *First*, That this Earth is the Habitation God has assign'd to Mankind ; and by this the *Apostle* takes away those City and Country Gods of the *Gentiles*, which the *Athenians* worshipt as much as others. *Secondly*, Hence we are taught, that it is the great and mighty power of Providence, to appoint the bounds of our earthly Countries and Dwellings ; for without his Appointment of every Mans Proportion, we should run into Confusions, and perpetual Troubles ; because no Man's interest would be owned by another, but left to the arbitrary will of the stronger to take all. And God has still that Royalty in himself of all, that he can, and therefore often does, take from one, and give to another ; root out one, and plant another Nation in the place of it : And hence are the Devolutions of Kingdom from one Family to another, which does include these two things. *First*, *Sin* which is the occasion of these

these changes in the World: And *Secondly*, *Vengeance*, which God takes for our Sins, as Gen. 15. 16. *In the fourth Generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* And this God often does, for correcting of his People for their *Idolatry*, *Pride*, *Cruelty*, and *Uncleanness*, yet still with the *Reservation* of his own, Jer. 45. 45. *That which I have built, will I break down, and that which I have planted, will I pluck up, even this whole land; but thy life will I give unto thee, in all places whither thou goest.* *First*, Therefore let us look up to God, because it is he only that makes all the changes in the World, and not be dejected; because we have great Possessions to *Day*, and none to *Morrow*. But humble ourselves under his Hand, and strive to get his Favour, and leave all *Worldly* things to be disposed of according to his good Pleasure. *Secondly*, Since it is God that has appointed man to dwell on the face of the earth, and predetermin'd what every one shall enjoy; let us be content with our Condition, and use no unlawful or indirect means to enlarge our Possessions, nor be puffed up if they be encreased; but rather still put our trust in God, and we shall never be moved, but still enjoy what is needful for us here, and after find an immoveable abiding City in Heaven. And this brings me to the fourth and last particular in the Text, to wit, the end of Man to seek God, That they should seek the Lord, if hap-
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ly they might feel after him, and find him, tho' he be not far from every one of us. The History of Man, which the Apostle does here annex to the Contemplation and Discourse of God, *Of his one matter, one blood, one habitation, the face of the earth*; he adds in the last place his own end here: also to *seek the Lord*. The term *Lord*, to the *Athenians*, did signifie, (as a word borrowed from Civility) as *Master*. But the *Apostle* having taught them before, that God is Lord of all, uses it here absolutely, and accustoms them to the sacred use of it, *to seek* (as I told you before) is to labour to find that which we look for, or miss; these words then describe Man's end. *First*, By his *act* expressed in a *Metaphor*, *to seek* like a blind Man, and the *Object* the *Lord*. For your more easie understanding, it is *First* to be laid down as granted, that the end is some good, and that a common good, and a good which all may pretend to. *Secondly*, That it has great Conveniency and Suitableness, with the best and firmest Operations. *Thirdly*, That it being acquired and enjoyed, gives the greatest content and rest; for until it be obtain'd, there is no rest. And *Fourthly* and *Lastly*, It runs through all Operations, at least in the *Habit*, if not in the *Act*.

By these Rules it is very plain, that those things which are without us, such as Riches, Honour, Fame and Power, cannot be the proper end of Man, because these are not attainable by all; neither are they good, because

cause they make Men generally worse, and not better, and little avail in bettering our Minds, and tho' enjoyed, they never fully satisfy us, as *Solomon* who tryed all things Witnesses; for he says, *All is but vanity, and vexation of Spirit.* Secondly, Neither are the good things of the Body, *the end of Man*, as Beauty, Health, Youth, Strength, and pleasure of Sense; for the same reason I gave you before, (that is) all cannot have them. And the few that have them, are sometimes the most lewd Men, as *Abolon* was, for all his Beauty, and these reach not to the Soul and Mind, and *Operations* thereof; they leave the Mouth at last fill'd with Gravel, and the better Men are, the less they value *Pleasures*. If Mens Happiness consisted in these, *Beasts* are more happy, because they have a more free enjoyment of them, not having the knowledge of the last Judgment, and the dreadful Consequences of it, to check their Fruition: Hence therefore it is plain; *First*, that God alone is the final end of Man's Happiness, because he is the only Supream and common Good, that is agreeable to the Rational Soul, which is still tending to God as its *end*. Witness the natural Inclination of all Men to Religion, which is so strong (that they will with these *Athenians*, worship a *false* God, rather than none at all). On him the Soul only rests, despising and selling all other things, to purchase that *one Jewel* of great value. *Secondly*, as God is the final object of *Man*, so the act

act about this *end*, the work and employment of Man, is *to seek God*; and the reason is plain, because that in seeking our selves, we lost not only him, but our selves too. But then this seeking implies a diligent enquiry and consideration of all means, that may lead to the knowledge of God. As *First*, The consideration of the *Works of God*, in which his almighty power and Godhead does appear, as in the Text. *Secondly*, By the *Holy Bible*, of which an Ancient Writer says well, that he that searches it, shall find God; and that understands it, shall be compelled to believe, that it is the word of God. And our *Saviour* encourages the *Jews* to this search, which must be ever accompanied with earnest and humble Prayers to open our eyes, and to discover himself unto us. *Thirdly*, Knowing or perceiving any thing of our God, we must then seek what his Will is, that is, what he requires at our hands; and we must draw near and submit our selves unto him, by giving an impartial Obedience to what we know are his Commands. I say, this drawing near to God, must produce in us a readiness to obey what he highly esteems; and if we do this, *he will shew himself unto us, and will come and sup with us, and reveal his secrets unto us.* And if there be any thing obscure in the Doctrine, St. John tells us, that *If we do the will of God, we shall understand it.* And this Doctrine is of great use to us; for that by it, we shall be able to judge of the wisdom of the whole course of our

Lives; for if to *seek God* be our end, and our chief endeavour, our Souls stand right, and we may go on in the strength of God; and if he be not in all our thoughts, we disappoint him of his end, in placing us here; we do only cumber the Earth as the barren Fig-tree, and the Lord himself will require at our Hands; and without amendment, will pronounce that dreadful Sentence against us, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.* And thus briefly I have run through the several parts of the Text: *First, the Maker of Man, God. Secondly, the Matter, of one Blood. Thirdly, the place of his Residence, the face of the Earth. And Fourthly, his end to seek the Lord;* and shewed you, that God is the final object of Man, and that seeking him, ought to be his main end, and principal employment. I shall now consider the *Manner* and *Success* in these words, *If haply they might seek after, and find him.* But this I design for the Subject of another days Discourse, and shall now conclude with a few Practical Directions.

First, That we seriously consider and examine our ways, and try how far we have followed this Advice of the *Apostles*, whether we have made God the ultimate end of our Actions; if so, we shall find that all we have hitherto done, was in order thereunto, and that we regard nothing in this World, but as it served to bring us to a nearer knowledge of God, and a firmer Obedience to his will. But alas! I am afraid we shall find ourselves so far from having done this, that most of us have only profest God to be *the end of*
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our seeking, when indeed the God of this World, that is, Temporal Enjoyments, Carnal Pleasures, and Sensual Delights, have been the direct *end* we aim'd at. And since we cannot upon a strict examination of all our Actions, but find this to be true, let us for the time to come, alter our purposes, and turn our selves to *God's Testimonies*, as the *Psalmist* says, *Let us make hast*, and without delay keep this charge which he has given to all Mankind, *to seek him*. *Secondly*, Let us often think upon this *End*, and the Happiness it will bring us to, if we be earnest Suiters for it; and what misery we shall run into, if we slight and neglect it. *Thirdly*, As it is our Duty to think of, and to seek this *end*, so we must enquire how near to, or far from obtaining it, we are; and this we shall easily perceive, by examining what our thoughts run most upon, what is the frequentest Subject of our Meditation. And if that be the World, with its Vanities, if to be great and Rich, if to get an Estate, and not matter by what means, either right or wrong we come by it; believe it, if this be the case, (as I fear it is of too many of us) God is not the *end* we seek for. But if it be our study to set a strict watch upon our Hearts, that they neither contrive, nor cherish any thing that is contrary to the express will of God; and so mortifie our carnal Affections and Appetites, that they chiefly aim at pleasing of God, and being Happy; then we may be sure that we are not only in the right way

way of seeking God, but that it is impossible while we continue thus, to miss of him; for *he is near to all those that seek him in holiness and truth.* Fourthly, Let us rouse up our selves to this work, lay aside every weight that hinders us; and in order thereunto, we must know, that it is not enough for us to come to this place, and to hear God's Word, but we must also be reformed, and informed by it; for Christianity is a Progression, from one degree of Holiness to another. And if you do not find that you are Proficients in it, that is, that you find your relapses into Sin less frequent, your sorrow for Sin more intense, your Repentance more perfect, and your Inclination to Sin less violent, believe it, you have only the name of a Christian, and are no more really so, than a Parrot is a Man, because he can pronounce some words which he does not understand. And this is so far from seeking God, that it is the way never to find him: Therefore good Christians, let me entreat you no longer to content your selves with a careless and lazy *seeking of the Lord*, but while it is to day, make hast how to learn to find him; and in so doing, you have assuredness to find him, and true Happiness in the enjoyment of him. And therefore, tho' there be difficulty in this Work, yet there is no danger of losing your Labour, which I shall hereafter shew unto you, because, *Never any Man sought the Lord in vain*, who plentifully rewards every one that serves him: which God grant we may all of us do, for *Jesus Christ's* sake, *To whom with the Father, &c.* Dis-

DISCOURSE IX.

Of the Chief End and Duty of Man.

Acts 17. 27, 28, 29.

That they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him and find him, tho' he be not far from every one of us, for in him we Live and Move and have our being, as certain also of your own Poets have said for we are also his Off-spring, &c.

THat God is the final object of Man, and seeking for him his main and principal Employment, we have already prov'd, it now remains, to consider the Manner and Success of this Seeking, in these Words which I have now

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read unto you. The first word *Feel* is deriv'd from the touch of Strings in Instruments, and from this very Expression of the *Apostle*, we learn this inference that all Mankind has lost all that clear Knowledge of *God*, which it had in the State of Innocence, and therefore must take greater pains in seeking him, or else we shall never find him. First because we are deprived of that evident Light both outward, and inward, whereby we might *feel after God*, or readily find him: He is *Light*, and at first shin'd upon *Adam* with open Face, and more than he did on *Moses*; so that he might easily *see* and perceive him. But now Naturally Men walk in Darkness, because *their understandings are Darkned*, Rom. 1. 25. but where they are converted, God opens their *Eyes*, and Teaches them to turn from *Darkness unto Light*, and causes a certain Supernatural *Light* to Shine to them in the Person of *Jesus Christ*, as you have it in 2 Cor. 4. 6, 7. For *God who has Commanded Light to Shine out of Darkness, hath Shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.* But we have *this treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*, and so again, the same *Apostle* has it, *we all with open Face beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed*

changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. But yet notwithstanding we have depriv'd ourselves of this Light, our end is still the same, to wit God and our Work to seek him: But with this difference that we can now only seek him by discourse from such things as we can grope, and fall upon by Sense, as by the visible Works of God, as Psal. 19. 1. the Heavens declare the Glory of God and the Firmament shews his handy Work, and Rom. the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead. The Scriptures are used to borrow forms of Speech from our Senses, as the Chaldees taught their Morality by Mystick Words, the Egyptians by Hieroglyphics, and the Greeks by Fables, and God did lead the Jews by external Rites and Ceremonies to the purity of the Heart, and by the Services of the Body, to the Obedience of the Spirit. And so he does also here by the Apostle accommodate himself to our Capacities, by speaking after our manner of conception, and therefore uses this term of *Feeling*: Because it has a proportion to our Senses, and is agreeable to our Capacities, and therefore now we are to come to a Knowledge of him by this way, of *Feeling*; and this the Apostle clearly Demonstrates

Acts 14. 17. Where he saith, *God left not himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness*, these are Gods Witnesses, and plainly testify of him, besides the great work of his Providence, which does evidently manifest him unto us, in *beholding every one that is Proud and abating of him, Job 40. 11.* and so likewise do his Judgments upon exorbitant Villanies, such as are Murthers, Perjuries, and Rapines. The Barbarous Inhabitants of *Melita* knew this Ground; tho' they were deceived in the application of it, when the Viper hung upon St. Paul's Hand, and oftentimes he Imprints the fault in the very Punishment, as in *Adonibezek, Judges 1. 7.* as *I have done so God hath requited me.* And therefore tho' we have made it hard for us by destroying the Abilities we at first had, to find God, we must not therefore be discouraged and give over *Feeling* after him, But the more difficulty there is in the Work, and the more blunt our understanding is, the more Force we must put to it, *Eccles. 10. 10.* *If the Iron be blunt, and he do not whet the Edge, then must he put to more Force.* Secondly, the more thanks we owe him, if he offers himself unto us when we seek him not, if he say, *here am I*, especially if he calls and sends his

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Servants to us. *Thirdly*, seeing there is more difficulty in *seeking* him, the more careful we must be in not losing him, when we have found him, and in cherishing every little spark, and glimmering of the Knowledge of him. *Secondly*, from the very connexion of the Words, *seek the Lord if happily they might feel after and find him*, we may infer that it is not only an uncomfortable, but a careless seeking, that despairs to find, *What shall we do*, says Job 37. 23. It is the Almighty we cannot find him? And Chap. 23. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him*, I confess indeed that to find him out perfectly, is above our Skill, and Capacity, if he would cover himself either with the dark Cloud, or with Light unapproachable: But it is not to be despaired but that with diligence, and constancy, we may find him, as the *Apostle* adds, and proves, which is the encouragement he gives in the Text *for seeking him*, in these Words, *tho' he be not far from every one of us*, which is the next thing: For *First*, according to his *Essence*, he fills Heaven and Earth, and therefore cannot be far from us; *Secondly*, he is not far from us according to his *Power*, and *Working*, as you have it, Job 23. 10, 11. *He knoweth the way that I take when he hath tried me I shall come forth as Gold*. *Thirdly*, according to his *Grace* and *Favour*, he is near unto all that call upon him

in Holyness and Truth, and Psal. 149. 19 to fulfil the desire of all those that fear him. Neither is this only to some few chosen Vessels, for the *Apostle* says *every one* in the Text, for he includes his Judges, and Hearers, in this Number. And thus as you see the common comfort which is extended to all in *seeking God*, and the common Work of all to *seek after him*, so the facility is common to all, if they set themselves heartily about it: And therefore the *Apostle* particularizes, and says *every one* of us, to the end of his Words might make the deeper impression and induce every Man to *seek God*, as Chap. 20. 31. *I ceased not to warn every one of you, and so, 1. Thess. 2. 11. We charged every one of you as a Father does his Children.* Every where he uses this form, *as let every Soul be Subject to the higher Powers, every Man to please his Brother, every Man as God has given the measure, every Mans Work, every Mans Wages, every Man his own Wife, every Man shall receive according to the good he doth, and every Man to consider not his own things only, but the things of one another, otherwise if he had spoken in General, and said only to us, the Athenians might have thought that God was near some or a few of them, and so all of them would not be encouraged to seek after him, but God has not sent only to Men of Eminent Places, and Dignity,*
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not only to the Wise and Learned, not to this, or that Nation, but to all in particular, and every of this all, may find him, *If they seek after him*, and therefore none of us must excuse ourselves from this *seeking* of God, with such foolish Words as too to many are apt to say: As let *Scholars* and *Churchmen* think of these matters, and busie their Brains about them, we are Men of another Profession. I confess indeed that tho' Scholars have better helps for *finding* God, and Church-men are nearer to him than others, that is in the publick Administration of Sacred Functions, as *Deut. 10. 3.* and he either will be honoured by them, or else get himself honour upon them; Yet none can be excused from this *seeking of God*: Because every Man has a Soul which must be saved by his own, and not anothers endeavors only, and that *God is so near* to all, that every one may find him that will be but at the Pains to *seek him*; and this brings me to the third thing to be considered in the Text, which tells us *that in him we Live and Move and have our Being*, that is we Live not only *from him*, but *in him*, by his Support and Assistance: For he did not in our first formation in the Womb, only breathe the Breath of Life unto us: But he also supports us in continuing that Breath unto us. *Psal. 104.* and gives us Food and Strength, for our Life is not in

our Meat and Riches, And *we Live not by Bread alone*, (that is proper means for our Sustenance :) *but by every word that proceeds out of God's Mouth*, that is by whatsoever God has ordain'd for our Preservation which is considering the brittleness of our Constitution, as great, if not a greater Miracle, than our Creation, and likewise *we move in him*, that is by his conserving those faculties by which we are enabled to *Move*, tho' not by giving us any immediate motion of Force or impulse, no not to what is good it self, for he sweetly draws us by moral Perswasions, and does not compel us, that we may have the reward of the Work we perform: Yet still so, that the Glory and Praise may redound to himself, for being not only the first Author of the Ability but also the preserver, and continuer of it. It is confest he deals with us, as a Master does with his Child, at his first learning to Write, first guides his Hand, and when the Child makes a handsom letter, the praise belongs to his Master that guided him, and not to himself. So when we do any thing that is good, the whole Praise belongs to Gods assisting, and directing Grace. But when we do amiss, the whole blame lies upon our selves, in that we would not be directed by him. And the *Apostle* adds, we have our *Being*, as well as *Life*, and *Motion from him*, that is our very *Essence* depends

pend upon his influence ; for alas without that, we may be soon dissolved into our first nothing, the heat of a Summer Sun, or the cold of a Nipping Winter, the least excess in our Meat, or Drink, in our Exercise, or Recreation, a little trip in the Streets, or a sudden turn of our Bodies, without his Providence and Influence, would so disorder the whole frame of our Constitutions, that we should soon moulder away into the first Dust of which we were made, and therefore we may from hence, at once as well see our nearness to God, as the great obligations we have *to seek him*. And then the *Apostle* proves what he has said, by Testimonies which is the fourth thing in the Text, *as some of your own Poets say*. Some Expositions are of opinion, that *St. Paul* here brings the Sense, and not the Words of their Poets, for that which follows, is of another matter, where he says *we are his Off-spring*, and does not prove that *in God we Live, and Move, and have our Being*, and indeed these Expressions that God is the *Father* of Men, and that such is Mens Strength, and Wisdom, and Counsel, and Courage as God endues them with, we find in many of the *Heathen Poets*, and tho' the Words following (*we are his Off-spring*) be said by them of *Jupiter a Pagan Idol*, yet that does not weaken the *Apostles* Argument, because
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he only takes the general Sense touching God, and would shew that the *Pagan* Divinity had some remnant of Truth, which he uses to inform them rightly of the true God, and their own End, and Duty. From hence then we may first observe, that it is Lawful to use humane and profane Learning, even in teaching Divinity, and explaining the mysteries of the Scripture, for we see *St. Paul* was exercised in the *Heathen Poets*, as may appear by his quoting *Aretas* here in the Text. Secondly, as it is lawful to read them, so likewise to use their Testimonies, for Truth wheresoever it is, is Gods, and God himself did not find fault with the *Israelites* for offering the *Aegyptians* spoils to the Tabernacle, and tho' an Argument from Scripture is sufficient to prove that for which it is brought, if it be pertinently cited, yet these *Heathen* Testimonies may be useful not to confirm us, who own, and have the Scripture; but to weaken, and confute them, that have them not. And therefore that which helps may be used, because that tho' it may not be needful to the thing, it may be to the Man: And therefore *St. Paul* made use of their Testimonies, because they not allowing the *Scriptures*, he had nothing else to convince them by, but Reason and their own Authors. Yet this should be done prudently, and sparingly, for we see
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St. Paul does it but twice or thrice in all his *Epistles*, and the chief aim of the *Preacher* should be the Edification of his hearers, and not shewing his own Knowledge or Reading, or the useless tickling and vain pleasing of their Ears, who are more taken with a pleasing Noise, than with solid and material Truth. And now you have heard the *Apostle* discourse to his Judges, and Hearers; If I should run over all the Circumstances, that is the prudence of his Behaviour, the weight and solidity of his Arguments, and the several politick contrivances, he uses to draw the *Athenians* from their Idolatry to the Knowledge of the true God, and strive to describe in Expressions suitable to so great a Subject, and pleasing to your fancies, I might perhaps satisfy your Ears, but without some farther Application very little inform your Judgments or work upon your Affections. And therefore because this Discourse of the *Apostles* was to Heathens, that did not know the true God, and therefore may be thought not to concern us, who acknowledge God, I shall spend the remainder of the time in letting you see, that (to our grief) we are this Day no less concerned in it, than the *Athenians* were, and give you some directions how you may so seek God as to be sure to find him, and *First*, to shew that we are not less concerned in this

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Discourse than the *Athenians* were, we must consider what it is, that differences us from them, I know every one of us is ready enough to say, *they were Idolatry*, but we acknowledge and worship the true God: And truly let me tell you, if we seriously consider what it means to Worship the true God, I am afraid upon a strict Examination, we shall find that while we pretend to that, we are very far from it; for alas, it is our unhappiness with the *Pharisees* to insist upon outward Forms, and not to mind at all, what is required thereby, that is the Purity of the Heart, and Spirit, it is confessed we come to *Church*; but we do not revere the Glory of that God that dwells in it, we come I say to *Church*, out of meer Custom, or it may be, because we cannot tell how to spend an hour without weary-somness at home, and perhaps we say *Amen* to the Prayers, when we neither heartily desire, what is prayed for, nor endeavour to obtain the Grace that is desired, and this is Just as if a Man should run of his Masters Errand, and yet not do it, and tho' we acknowledge a God, yet our Practices are a flat denial of him. So that he that believes there is a *God*, must either do what this God *Commands*, or else he only owns him, because he was accustomed to do so, and heard others say so, instead of doing, which is the Life of Christianity,

Christianity, we are content with hearing, and all our Religion is run into our Ears, and instead of the most material Parts thereof, such as is Prayer, visiting the Sick, and the Fatherless, and relieving the Indigent, which the *Apostle* calls *pure Religion and undefiled before God*, to mortify our Lusts, and Concupiscencies, and to submit to the commands of our Lawful Superiours, and to own the Discipline of the *Church*: We please ourselves in having done enough, in hearing of a Sermon, which tho' it may be of good use, yet was never ordain'd by God, nor appointed by his Church as a part of his Worship, and I fear if we come to Examine how that too, which we are so fond of, relishes with us, we shall find that it has no better entertainment than the rest: For either the Preacher was too Learned, and then he sought his own Praise; or he was not Scholar enough, and then he was Ignorant, he spake too close to some Sins, and then he was too particular; or he spoke generally; and then no Body could tell what he would be at; his Discourse was too tedious, and therefore did tire his Auditors; or it was too short, and then he had done before a Man could tell what he meant: and I appeal to all of you that hear me, if these and such like be not the uses you make of Sermons, otherwise it is impossible that notwithstanding some of you, have

have been hearers of Sermons Twenty, Forty, and Fifty Years, yet, I am, afraid have found so little benefit thereby, that you have not been driven from your Sins, but stick as close to the World and the Vanities thereof as ever. I could wish your own knowlege of being made better, and appearance of it by its Fruits, could confute this suspition of mine; for let me tell you, there is no certainer way of Judging of your amendment and proficiency in Christianity, than by finding your selves less apt to be overcome by *Sin*, and more delighted in obeying the *Gospel*, and if what I have now said, be our condition we are only thus far different from the *Athenians*, that we are a worse sort of *Idolaters*, because we acknowledge the *true God*, and yet rob him of the Worship which is due to him, or indeed make him worse than their *Idols*, inasmuch as we Live not according to his commands. And yet fancy he will not be offended with us. *Secondly*, the *Athenians* and we are alike concerned in this discourse, of the *Apostles* in the main, tho' not in every particular Circumstance, for they Worship such for Gods as they imagined were the Authors of any good to them, and so do we Serve and *Worship* Men for their *Favour*, and Interest, and hopes of getting by them, more than we do *God*. And I am afraid
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if we come to a particular and impartial Examination of our selves, we should find as many *Shrines* as the *Athenians* had, one has his *Patron*, another his *Gold*, a third his *Lust*, a fourth his *Revenge*, a fifth his *Malice*, and another his *Pride*. To which he Sacrifices not only his Labour and Pains, but his *Soul* it self, and will do that any thing, rather than these his *Gods*, should be disserved. And thus you see how this discourse of the *Apostles* may be as suitable to us, tho' we profess our selves *Christians*, as to those *Athenians*; and now it remains only to make application of the whole. You have heard the *Apostles* discourse to his Judges and hearers; the end of which was not to satisfy our Ears with what has been spoken; but to pick out of his Doctrine, what may be for our own use and instruction. *First*, then since it appears by what has been delivered, that God is the end that every one of us, ought to *feel after*, let us immediately apply our selves to this Work, and let none of us think our selves exempted from it, for the *Apostle* says every one of us, and let such of us who know more of God than others, *seek after him*, not only to fill our Heads with more Knowledge, that they may please themselves with sublime Speculations and Notions of the Deity, but to *seek* so as to find him by his Graces; that is by enabling him to *serve* him

him more *Devoutly*, and to pray unto him more *Fervently*, to Obey him more *Impartially*, and to Love him more *Intensely*. This, this is that seeking of God, which we *Christians* are to endeavour after, and that we get a right conception of him, that is, that his *Justice* is not to be *perverted*, nor his *Mercy* to be *abused*, nor his Knowledge to be *avoided*; and from these conceptions to draw practical inferences for our selves, that is, endeavour to gratify his *Justice*, by doing what he has commanded, to Extol his *Mercy* by Repentance, to which his Patience and forbearance invites us, and to Justify his Knowledge, by placing him always before us, that so we may not attempt to do that any *thing* that shall offend so knowing a God. *Secondly*, let not the Weakness, or the little Knowledge any of you has, discourage you from *seeking God*, for they that have no Light at all shewn to them, do *feel* by their Fingers ends, and oftentimes find what they look for, and thus God is found by them that have no Light at all shewn them, because *that in him they also Live, and Move, and have their Being*. And if they do but (according to the measure of Knowledge given to them) carefully grope after him, God will discover himself unto them, for he assists them with his Grace who desire it, and has offered himself to all in *Christ*, so that

that we are not only *God's Off-spring* by Creation, *but he has begotten us again to a lively hope*, 1 *Pet.* But then thirdly that you may be sure to find this God, seek him in his Words and Sacraments; for there he manifests himself; and labour not so much in your seeking of him there, either to understand his Nature, or to know his Will, and what he suffered upon the *Cross*; as to do his Will, and to obey his Words, to be fearful to offend him, careful to please him, thankful for his Favours, and mindful of your Duty. *Fourthly*, if you are not able to find him out soon, do not despair, but continue your search for him, and supply your own Weakness, by the assistance of others: That is your Pastor whom God has appointed to instruct you in, and to teach you the things that appertain unto him: But you must be sure that he is lawfully called, for tho' God has promised to be with *them* to the end of the World. Yet it was to them only that he Commissioned: And tho' they may want experimental Knowledge *themselves*, yet they may shew it unto *others*, for they convey Grace by Virtue of their Office, and not by their Personal Sanctity; therefore be not deceived by such as come with their new Lights, and say, loe here is *God*, and there is the *Lord*, this is the *Way*, and that is the *Way*, follow
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it; though they may have *Sheeps* Cloathing, yet they are very *Wolves*; for that they come only for their own *Worldly* advantages, and devour the *Flock of Christ*, by dividing and distracting them in their *seeking after God*. And that you may discern who these are, I shall only give you this note of them; they are such as separate from the *Church*, and by that very *Act* declare, that they have not yet found *God*: And therefore are not fit or like to direct you how to *seek him*, *Mark such* says the Apostle, *as separate themselves, and have no Fellowship with them*. Secondly, who ever makes the word of *God* a ground for disobeying the lawful *Magistrate*, is none of the *Ministers of Christ's* institution, and therefore very unfit to teach you how to seek *God*, or to find him: And that these who have seduced many of you are such, needs no clearer Proof, than their daily Practice in Preaching contrary to the declared *Laws of the Land*. And let me be bold to tell you, that while ever you follow them; you shall never find *God*, I say it again, because that finding of him *that* ought to be the utmost endeavour of every *Christian*, must be according to his own directions, which includes an universal Obedience to the *Gospel*; and therefore is not consistent either with *Schism* or *Rebellion* or both, which they often are Guilty of
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therefore it becomes you to consider what you are doing ; because that while you follow these Men , you willingly punish your selves with that, which the Primitive *Christians* thought (next to *Damnation*) the greatest Punishment imaginable, that is, *Excommunication* from the *Church*, and then you can have no hopes though you *seek God*, of ever finding him, while you continue in that State. *Fifthly*, let none of us suffer our selves to be deceived, and kept off from this necessary Work, by the Riches, and Vain, and empty Pleasures of the World, but let us begin to Examine how far we have gone in *this seeking of God*. And let us not only judge of our proficiency by comparing our Actions by the Negative commands of *God*, but also by the positive. For I am afraid there are many amongst us , who though they will not *Murder*, yet make no scruple of *Killing* their *Brothers* good Name , that will not cut his Throat, yet will call him *Fool*, and invent *Lyes* in secret against him, and publish them to disgrace him openly. And though they will not steal his Money for fear of the *Laws* , yet they will oppress craftily, and over-reach him , in Bargains and Traffick, and care not to what extremity they put him , so they may but gain something by it for themselves. *Sixthly*, Remember the time of this *Seeking God*

in times of Affliction; such are the danger of Church, or State, or publick Famine, or War; then ought we to seek the Lord with earnest *Prayers*, that he might deliver us from these Troubles, or else give us Strength, and Patience to bear them. Lastly, Let us remember the Season of *Seeking*, *Isai. 55. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near*, for there is danger and hazard, that if we do not then seek him, that we shall never find him, afterwards, though we seek him. *Prov. 1. 28. For then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early; but they shall not find me.* For God has appointed a certain prefixt time for us to find him, and if we slip, or neglect that critical moment, our State is irrecoverable. God will not wait one Minute longer for us: Let us therefore, while it is to day, turn to God, and beseech him to discover himself unto us, and that as he stirs up in any of us the beginning of a good *desire*, or *motion* towards him, so to further and cherish it, and bring it to an happy and good Effect. And now to wind up all in a word, I desire you to remember that the *Apostle* says we are his *Off-spring*; that is, not only created by his *Power* out of the Earth, but also formed according to his own *Image*, in being made after his likeness; and therefore since God has so highly

highly honoured us, as to imprint his own *Image* upon us, in giving us a rational Soul, whereby we may not only understand the excellency of our Nature, but what ought to be our greatest Ambition, let us scorn to place our Happiness in any thing, but in the enjoyment of him. All other things you have, bear no proportion to the Soul of Man, which as it partakes of some degrees of Infinity, so nothing less than what is Infinite can satisfy it. And therefore despise these base and groveling thoughts which rivet us to the World, and let your practice agree with the name you profess, that is, *Christian*, let it teach us to Crucify all Worldly Thoughts, and Carnal Affections, and to despise these Earthly Contentments, Riches, and Power, of which the meanest and basest has oftentimes a greater share, than the Generous, and the Brave, and look to the end for which we were made, that is, to *seek God*, and to rest in him alone: If we can once bring our selves to this pass, we shall not only find the *Apostles* advice easy and pleasant, but also full of rewards in bringing us the highest satisfaction, in observing it, and the fullest and surest *reward* in performing it. And because there is nothing more that baffles our resolution in *seeking God*, than the difficulty we find in parting with an *Old Custom*; and the beginning of

our undertaking of an Holy Life, is usually the hardest task ; let us for encountring this difficulty, but propose to our selves, the miserable condition we shall be in, if we do not undertake it, and the happiness we shall acquire, if we perform it. And I perswade my self the difference will be so great, and apparent, that it will easily prevail with, and perswade any rational and considering Man to undertake it, *for to him that hath shall be given*, that is, God is always ready to further and assist all those with his Grace, that endeavour to make use of what Grace they have received, and I am sure we cannot (without manifest Ingratitude) but own, that we have received a great measure of his Grace, in that God has overlookt the times that our Forefathers liv'd in, and has clearly revealed himself unto us, in these latter days, and has given us a clearer and a more manifest knowledge of himself, and shewed us a readier way both to *seek* and to *find* him. In that we have not only what he discover'd to our Ancestors, recorded for our Information, and confirmed by their Testimony, but also their Examples, to shew how we should *seek* and *find* him, we should be most Ungrateful, if we be not thankful for these so great Mercies, and for ever unhappy if we strive not thereby, so to seek God as to find him,
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and once having found him, never to part with him; for the Pleasures of the *Flesh*, or the Pomp and Vanity of the *World*; or the Promises of the *Devil*, until he bring us to that *Happiness* which all shall enjoy, that labour to seek him so as to find him:

Which God of his Mercy vouchsafe unto us all, for the Merits of Jesus Christ. To whom with the Father, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE X.

Of God's Commands for an Universal Repentance.

Acts 17. 30.

And the time of his Ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all Men every where to Repent.

THOU' the Knowledge of God is so Natural to every Man, and Printed in such plain and indelible Characters on the Soul, that a Man may as well deny himself, as the Existence of a Deity; that being (according to Tertullian) the very first Vesture of the Soul: Yet as soon as Man began to extinguish his own Natural Light, and by consenting to the Devil, and believing of a Lye, would needs hide himself in the shadow of Death
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and *Nothing*. God has an evident Punishment for that Sin, and as a most just effect of his Vengeance, suffered *Truth* to be hidden from him, and then according to that in the second to the *Romans*, *he vanisht in his thoughts, and his foolish Heart was Darkned*, and this Knowledge of God decreasing in him by the same measure, and degrees by which his Ignorance, and Sins encreased, he at last renounced *Faith*, *Innocency*, and *Reason*, which are the prime Parts of *intellectual Life*. But because God had some kindness for the yet remanent Parts of his own *Image*, and therefore took the Advantage of the forfeiture of his Primitive condition, on purpose to restore him to a better. And because that as Man departed from God, by unbelief and presumption, so he was to return unto him again, by Faith and Humiliation, he continued such Glimmerings of his *Original Light* unto him, as might enable him to grope after a *Deity*, and suffered him to wander in the Maze of his own imaginari- ons, that being wearied in the Prosecution of his Curiosity, he might the more willingly believe in the true God, when reveal'd unto him: And hence grew that great diversity of *Gods* heap'd upon one another, by the *Heathens*: For poor humane Nature having yet so much Reason left, as to deem the Existence of some *Superintendent Power* to be

be necessary, and being partly overwhelmed with the greatness of this Sovereign Essence, and partly clouded by its own Ignorance, Misery and Sin, unable to apprehend a *God* most only and simple, with one single touch of the *Soul*, has made an impertinent dissection of him, and whilst every one sought to adore that, which most flattered his imagination, or gratified his Sensuality, this supreme *Being* became divided into as many Fractions, as there are Errors upon the Altars of the *Gentiles*. Those who were more intellectual, deifying Virtues, others more absurd, Worshipping *Creatures*, some more foolish fashioning their Gods according to Human Shapes, and the more fearful deifying whatever they apprehended had Power of doing them either good, or hurt; some a piece of *Red Cloath* hung upon a Pole, or the first thing they met in the Morning: But such as amidst this general Ignorance, were of a more refined and gentile conversation, dissenting from these old ways, began to despise great *Monarchs*, and *Conquerors*, because they made their *Divinity* more favourable, and conspicuous by their daily distributions of Honours, and Worldly Fortunes, insomuch, that at last these very *Athenians*, to whom the *Apostle* makes this Address: Suffered themselves (tho' they were of most sublime Wit, and profound Learn-

Learning, to fall into the same Flatteries, and Absurdities and had their Male and Female Deities, in like Veneration with their Θεοῖς ἑσπερίοις: But when the most only simple, and true God, thought fit to give a cheque to this Conquest, which the Devil got over the work of his Hands, by making the Seed of the Woman break the Serpents Head; as the Sun breaks thro' the Clouds before it appears unto us, so the Son of Righteousness shot forth the Rays of his Majesty thro' all those Affronts, and Indignities, that were cast upon him, and became a Light to Lighten the Gentiles, and not only to shew them the way to the true God, but also how to forsake their false ones. And to this end the Apostle Preaches this true God to the Athenians, and however they were blameable for their Ignorance of him: Yet he being unwilling to exasperate them, by any upbraidings of that kind, ushers in his charging them to Repent, with a modest censure of their deeper Crimes, with the title of Ignorance, in the words of the Text, which is a proposal of a Reconciliation made by God: for the Apostle calls their minds from himself, to him whose Servant, and Messenger he is, and they contain these two particulars, First, a Discovery of what God's Council and Censure has been for the time past, in these Words, *the times of this Ignorance*
God

God winked at. Secondly, an *intimation* of what his *Pleasure* and *Command* is for the time to come, in these other Words: *But now Commandeth all Men every where to repent.* The former serves to prepare, the latter to strike the Stroke. In the former, we shall consider the *censure* the *Apostle* passes on the times, the *Athenians* and their Fore-fathers lived in *Idolatry*, that is *times of Ignorance*. Secondly, how God stood affected to them, *in these times of Ignorance*, he winked at or overlookt. And then proceed to the second part of the Text, *but now commandeth all Men every where to Repent*; and first of the *censure*: We are not to think that the *Apostle* uses this expression, as if the times wherein the *Athenians* liv'd, were times of general *Ignorance*, for without doubt, they had by their Study, and Industry, arrived to a greater measure of Natural and Humane Learning, than any other Nation; and *Athens* was so much lookt upon to be the School of Wisdom, and Knowledge, that she had her Profelytes from most parts of the World, that came to borrow Light from her Sun; no, he gives us only to understand, that these were times of Ignorance, with reference to that which went before, either in Worshipping God in *Imagery*, or in thinking him like their Gods, which dwelt in Temples made with Hands; or
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in neglecting to seek him to the end of their Life, or in not acknowledging him the *Author* and *Lord* of all; for the Greek Word is the same with that which expresses the *unknown God*, v. 23. and is as much as if he should say, the times of this unknowing, to which cause the Apostle ascribes *all the vain Conversations of the Gentiles*, Eph. 4. 18. *thro' Ignorance that is in them*, and so in 1 Pet. 1. 14. *former Lusts of Ignorance*, and Acts 3. 17. *I know that through Ignorance ye did it*, and whether they were wittingly, or unwittingly ignorant, the *Apostle* is not now desirous to examine, for there may be an *affected*, as well as an *invincible* Ignorance of every thing, and the latter is always less culpable than the former: And these *Athenians* might probably have been more guilty of the one, than of the other, because that, tho' Men may be invincibly ignorant of moral, or positive Precepts; yet they cannot possibly be so of the Law of *Nature*, and a Man may be culpably ignorant, when he will not enquire for, nor seek means to be informed of what he ought to know; nay, nor will not be informed, *when hearing they will not perceive, nor seeing they will not understand*; and many times that which a Man habitually knows, yet in the Act, and Exercise, is not present with him; which made *Plato*, and his Followers, hold, that all Sins were
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of Ignorance, and so St. Paul of himself, 1 Tim. 13. *Who was before a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, and Injurious: But I obtained Mercy, because I did it ignorantly.* But be their Ignorance what it will, the Apostle is not willing, nor the Holy Ghost that speaks in him, to aggravate it, and to give it an harder name, he leaves that Excuse for it: From all which, thus explained, I shall make these two inferences, and then proceed to the second Particular. *First*, That it is of all kind of Corrections, not only the most easy, but also the most prudent, in blaming to give a gentle term to the fault, and in accusing not to take notice, that the delinquent did willingly and purposely offend. *Secondly*, That this Course is always to be observed, especially by those that have the cure of Souls, unless it be to impudent, and obdurate Sinners, such as are past Shame; they are fitter to be lashed with St. Paul's Rod, than to be wrought upon by *his Spirit of Meekness*. And this gives me way to speak to the second Observable in the Censure, that is, to consider how God stood affected to these *Gentiles* in the times of their Ignorance, he *winked* at, or *overlookt*: Saw, but would not see, but was ready mercifully to remit the Punishment they deserved for their former Idolatry, if those that are now admonisht do repent; and as he thus
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overlookt their Ancestors, that is, suffered them to walk in their own ways, and did neither by threatning them with his Eternal *Wrath*, nor by revealing *Christ* unto them, use means to frighten, or dissuade them from their *Idolatry*, but saw and Bore with much Long-suffering, with the Vessels of *Wrath* fitted for Destruction, and did not hinder; not because his *Knowledge* could not take cognizance of them, or his *Providence* see them, for *Psalms* 14. 2. He looks down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God; but for a Punishment of their neglect of former Mercies, gave them up to be deluded by lying Oracles of Devils. And certainly this lenity of God is admirable, that having a pure Eye, and that which is done being exceeding evil in his Sight, and long continued in, and concerning himself, and his Honour too, whereof he says he is so Jealous; yet that he patiently bears all, and seems not to take notice of it, but holds his Tongue in the Prophet's Phrase, and is so far from punishing, that upon the Offenders Repentance, he freely forgives and pardons all: And tho' this his Lenity and forbearance makes some question his Providence, yet it is without any reason, since, that when his Long-suffering and Goodness, leads them not to Repentance, he delays his Punishment,

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to wait for the full measure of their Sins. As he waited for the full growth of the Wickedness of the *Amorites*; and is not *slack* as some Men count *slackness*; but sees the day of the Wicked, and at long run, *Even great Babylon herself shall come in remembrance before him, and he will give unto her the Cup of the Wine of the fierceness of his Wrath.* Neither can this proceeding of God with the *Heathen* World, before the coming of *Christ*, any way reflect upon his *Love* to Mankind, by thinking that God punisht them for what was not only morally, but physically impossible for them to perform, and for these Reasons: First, because God gave them Abilities proportionable to the Performances required; and tho' it may be objected that this was lost in *Adam*, and therefore his fault ought not to be charg'd upon his so distant Off-spring; yet this will not excuse, seeing every Man has had, not only naturally since the Fall, a competent Sufficiency for farther Discourses of Divine Truth, if improv'd; but they did, and still do, resist the Truth, and were otherwise highly guilty in transgressing the *Law of Nature*, which is sufficient without the Addition of other Crimes, to make them lyable to Punishment. *Secondly*, because, that over and above this, it is most certainly true, that never any, either *Jew* or *Greek*, was, or shall be saved, but by

by Faith in *Jesus Christ*: For in him all were *Elected*, he was not only *the desire of all nations*, but *the lamb slain from the beginning of the world*, the same to day and yesterday and for ever. And if Salvation could be had without him, then as the *Apostle* said, he had died in vain, yet I say besides this, *Christ* was Preacht to the World from the beginning, and without doubt *Adam* being taught by God himself, that *the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpents Head*, did commend and insinuate this to his Children *Abel*, *Seth*, and *Cain*. So that I may say with *Tertulian*, *Christus ponebatur ut depositum in communi mundo*. *Christ* was laid up as a common Stock for the World to draw Salvation out off: And tho' the *Israelites* were only and properly the peculiar People of God, yet the *Gentiles* were not before the *Incarnation* so little related to him: But that many of them attained to Salvation, as *Job* and *others*, but still by Faith in *Christ* to come, whether revealed to them by the Ministry of *Angels*, or by becoming *Profelytes* to the *Jews*. *Christ* then being thus Preacht to them from the beginning, and God no way hindering any of them from the Knowledge of him, if they themselves in process of time thro' carelessness or contempt, forget to retain, or neglect to come to a Knowledge of him; none can

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justly charge God with being in the least the Author of their Destruction: Neither is it Rational to oblige God to afford to all People alike, after the same manner and measure, the like means of Salvation; especially to remind them of those means, when they themselves contemptuously neglect, and forget them. *Thirdly*, because that tho' the *Gentiles* were invincibly Ignorant of *Christ*, yet they were not inculpably Ignorant; for their Ignorance might have been invincible, as relating to their present, or more remote Condition, but not as it related to their first and primitive State, when the Knowledge and Faith in *Jesus Christ* the *Mediator* was Preacht to all Men in general, in and by *Adam*; and was or at least might have been propagated to the several Successions of his Posterity down to *Noah's* Flood, and from him to his Posterity also. For invincible Ignorance does only then excuse from Guilt, when a Man cannot (tho' all necessities Abstractedly consider'd from himself concur) perform what he ought, tho' he uses his utmost endeavours. But then if this invincibility was occasioned by his own Weakning of his Faculties, by sinful and dissolute Courses; this is so far from excusing him either a *toto* or a *tanto*, that his Crime is aggravated by it. The Result then of all is this, that howsoever or upon whatsoever account

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God was pleas'd to overlook the *Gentiles*, before the Incarnation, that never any of them were saved but thro' his *Mercy* and their *Faith* in *Christ*. *Secondly*, that the Damnation of as many of them as were Damned, was meerly, and solely, thro' their own fault, and neglect. *Thirdly*, that it is to be ascribed to the Superabundance of his Bounty, and Goodness, that he was pleased when the fulness of time was come, to take our Nature upon him, and to manifest himself so clearly to the *Gentiles*, that nothing now but Wilfulness, and a shameful Carelessness, can hinder any to whom he is revealed, from Salvation. And this gives me way to speak to the second part of the Text, to wit, the intimation of his Pleasure for the time to come, in these Words, *But now commandeth all Men every where to Repent*. In which these three things are to be considered; *First*, the charge it self, to *Repent*, carrying an obligation to Obedience with it from the Authority of the giver, *God*. *Secondly*, the object of this Charge, *all Men*, with the adjunct of place *every where*, extending the universality to the exception of none. *Thirdly*, and Lastly, the Circumstance *now*, intimating the necessity of a present Repentance, and implying the danger of deferring it. I shall speak something to every of these, and then wind up all with

some short Application. And first as to the charge it self, to *Repent*, to run thro' the several parts and acceptations of *Repentance*, and to discover its whole Nature in General, requires a longer time than is allowed me: Therefore I shall not attempt this, nor spend time in telling you, how Faith and Repentance, in the federal Sense, are the same things, being distinguishable only by Relations, and not Realities: Nor intimate unto you how Repentance includes the whole *Gospel*, it being nothing else but the glad Tidings that God brought to Mankind, that an exact unfinning Obedience should not now be required of them, but that Men might be now saved by second Thoughts, Repentance, and amendment of Life, thro' Faith in *Jesus Christ*: Nor stand to prove against the *Antinomians*, and *Ranters*, that tho' *Christ* has made full satisfaction to *God* for us, yet we are, notwithstanding this, obliged to *Obedience* to the *Moral Law*, and must *Repent*, and *believe*, and have an Evangelical Righteousness, even under the very *Epieikia* of the *Gospel*. Nor prove against the *Novations* and *Perfectionists* that Repentance is to be allowed to such as Sin after *Baptism*. But that which I shall insist upon at present, is to enquire what is to be understood by the word *Repent*, here in the Text, as it related to the *Athenians*,
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and other unconverted *Gentiles*: And that is properly a *change of Mind* from their *Heathenish Idolatry* unto the true *God*, a fore-thinking what is past, and a returning to *God* for the future; and this was not required only by *God* in the *Law*, as you may see in *Deut. 30. 2. Return to the Lord and obey his Voice*, but *Christ* our Saviour required the same thing in the *New Testament*, by his forerunner the *Baptist*, and in his own *Ministry* too; tho' with different respects to the *Jew* and to the *Gentile*. For to the *Jew*, *Repentance* was Preacht before *Faith*; because they were sufficiently disposed to believe the *Revelations* of *God*. They had been used to *Prophecies*, and expected the *Messiah*, and were hindered from believing by nothing but by their *Lusts* and *Worldly mindedness*: Therefore till they had Repented of that, they could not believe. And our Saviour complains, that *they would not Repent, that they might believe*. But after they were invited to believe in *Christ*, they were first to be called to *Repentance*; because they had Crucified the *Lord of Life*: And if they would not Repent for Crucifying *him*, they would be far from believing him to be the *Lord of Life*, and their long lookt for *Messiah*. But the *Gentiles* were obliged to *believe* before they *Repented*; because they were Ignorant of the

true God, and Worshipt the *Devil*, who would be served with Lust, and Cruelty, and Drunkenness, and Revellings. And therefore they were first to *believe*; because it was necessary they should be convinc't of their false *Gods*, and informed of, and believe in the *true God*, before they could Repent. So then, that as Repentance is the Duty of Man revolted, and the sole condition of Peace and Reconciliation, so as it more particularly relates to the *Athenians* in the Text, and all other unconverted *Gentiles*, it is properly a *change* of Mind, from their *Ignorance*, and *Idolatry* unto the *true God*; as unto their *Creator*, *Nourisher*, *Father*, and *Preserver*; which *St. Paul* discoursed of to them, and convinc't many of them of, as *Dennis the Areopagit*, and others, both from Reason, and Arguments drawn from the *Topicks* of their own *Philosophy*. But now *Repentance*, as it relates to us, who already profess *Christianity*, is not so properly a change of Mind in this Sense, as it is a renewing of our *Baptismal Vow*; an Abrenunciation of all iniquity, contracted since *Baptism*; a sincere impartial Obedience to the *Gospel* for the time to come; a proficiency in *Christianity*; a tendency towards perfection, and a continuation of our Sanctification. And as without this kind of Repentance, Salvation can in no wise be obtained by us; so God
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by his *Apostle* here, does not limit it to a few, but extends it to all: Which brings me to the second observable in the *Charge*, to wit, the *Object* of it. And that is *every one*, with the adjunct of Place, *every where*, denoting the Universality. And here the *Apostle* delivers a general Message, as if he did foresee that it would be objected, that *Christ* died not for all, and therefore if so, it was in vain to urge them to Repentance, that were not to have an interest in his Death. And if this were admitted they might well say, hold thee in *Judea*; this message belongs not to us, but to the lost Sheep of *Israel* the *Hebrews*, who are *Gods* own peculiar People. But the *Apostle* has already answered this objection, by declaring that this God is *Creator of all*, *Lord of all*, *Father of all*, and to be sought of all, and to be found of all, and thus the *Apostle*, like a conscientious Servant, seeks his Masters Gain, and, like a faithful Messenger, delivers his Errand boldly to his *Judges* and *Hearers*, *Jews*, and *Gentiles*. Whence I shall infer these two conclusions. *First*, that *Christ* died *Intentionally* for all, and that by his *Death* not only *some* of every Nation, and Condition, but every *individual* Person in the World is put into a possibility and capacity of *Salvation*. *Secondly*, that God has in order hereunto given such a measure of Strength, and Evangelical Grace to all, to

whom the *Gospel* is preacht, as is sufficient (if they be not wanting to themselves in improving it) to bring them to Salvation. And first, That *Christ* died *intentionally* for all, will not be hard to prove, not only by what this very *Apostle* alledges in 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. where he says, that *Christ* is a *Saviour* of all, but especially of *Believers*, where this (*All*,) least it should be restrained to *the Household of Faith*, he anticipates this mistake with a distinction of *Special* and *General*. For if he be a *special* Saviour of *Believers*, he is certainly a *general* Saviour of all *Unbelievers*: Not that *Unbelievers* can be saved while they are either so, or impenitent; but that they are now, by his *Death*, so far put into a Capacity of Salvation, that nothing can deprive them of it, but their own willful Neglect, and Contempt. And add unto this, that if as many were made alive in *Christ*, as died in *Adam*, and none be allowed to have an Interest in the Death of *Christ*, but the *Elect*; that then it will follow, that none died in *Adam*, but such: And upon this account, they that are excluded from Benefit in *Christ's* Death, are still in a state of Innocency; for as much as they fell not in *Adam*, and so stand in no need of *Christ*. And surely, if it be allowed that *Christ* dyed for such as deny him, and the *Apostle* tells us of such, as *deny the Lord that bought them*; why

why may it not be rationally concluded, that he died for those that are less guilty, and never heard of him ; especially, since the Redemption is not fixt to the *Revelation* of *Christ*, but to his Death : And to put this out of all question, do but consider, that if it be not granted that *Christ* died for *all*, how impossible it would be, to use any rational Arguments to persuade an *Heathen*, that he is to believe in him for Salvation. For indeed if this be not allowed, all Endeavours of that kind, must not only be superseded, but our very Prayers for bringing in the fullness of the *Gentiles*, would be Idle and Impertinent. And as *Christ* has redeemed *all*, that is, by his Death, put them into a possibility of Salvation ; so he has likewise, by the very Tenor of the *second Covenant*, given every one to whom the *Gospel* is preacht, such a measure of Grace, as is sufficient, and may be effectual to their Salvation, if not obstructed by themselves. For that God that swears he desires not the Death of a Sinner, and passionately calls for a Reason, why will ye die ? And wishes that all should repent, and believe, and be saved, cannot be supposed to desire them to do Impossibilities. It is only proper for *Pharaoh's* Taskmasters to exact the Tale of *Bricks*, and not to allow *Straw*. But it is the essential Property of a Gracious God to give Abilities

bilities futable to what is required; tho' these are distributed after a less, or greater measure, according to his good Pleasure; yet every one has a Sufficiency, for the Performances that are required. For he that receiv'd but one Talent was to make but a proportionable Return to that, and not to the five Talents which the other received. And altho' this Sufficiency is not alike effectual to all, yet that is solely from the Fault and Negligence of the *Receiver*, and not from the penuriousness of the *Giver*. For *God* is Just, tho' every *Man* be a *Liar*. Yet you must take notice, that tho' they that perish are damn'd for their not improving the first *Grace*; which, if well used, would have been seconded with another; yet that they who are saved, are saved by the Grace of *God*, first preventing them in such a fit, and congruous manner, that it is not slighted; and exciting them to good, yet not so irresistably, but that they may withstand it: Which, if they did improve, *God* would give more Grace according to that, *that to him that hath, shall be given*, and would enable them both to will, and to do; and upon their constant right use of these, would still advance them to higher degrees of Sanctification, and Perseverance; till at length he accomplish, and reward them with a Crown of Glory. And tho' it may be objected against this

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Universal Redemption, that the *Heathens* that have not heard of *Christ*, are nothing benefitted thereby, since this Grace accompanies the *Gospel*; yet this is not to be charged on *God*, since he has put the *Gospel* into the hands of the *Church*, to disperse it to all, and gave Commission to Men, selected on purpose for that end, saying, *Go and preach the Gospel to all Nations, and he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* And moreover, we cannot tell, but that *God* may have some secret Reason, why he denies some the *Gospel*, and vouchsafes it to others: And therefore we must ascribe the application of the means, to some Places, and not to others, to the Providence of *God* only; every Fold whereof we must not think our selves able to plane and smooth out with our shallow Reason. Yet this Objection can be of no force, since the Salvability of all to whom the *Gospel* is preach'd, is as contrary to asserting of *Christ* dying only for the *Elect*, as it would be if extended to the *Heathens* also: Because, all to whom the *Gospel* is preacht, are not, according to that Doctrine, in the number of the *Elect*. But whether this will satisfy or not, this may, that we have nothing to do with judging them that are without, *seeing they either stand or fall*

to their own Master, and therefore it is our duty to consider, that whatever Privileges we may have as *Christians*, above *Heathens*, yet this is not one, that a less degree of Obedience shall be accepted from us, than from them: *No*, but the clear contrary, that to whom less is given, from them less shall be required, and that none can be denominated guilty from what he never received. And thus having spoken to the *object* of this repentance to every one, I shall lay down these few Conclusions, and then proceed to the last thing in the Text, the Circumstance. *Now first*, that since God has excepted none from Repentance, that none of us Except our selves. *Secondly*, That since God gives sufficient Grace to all to whom he vouchsafes the *Gospel* of Repentance, that we willfully resist not his preventing Grace, but watch all opportunities of Grace, and with an honest humble Heart, cheerfully receive and improve it. *Thirdly*, That if we have slipt any Opportunities of Grace, (and who has not) that we bewail and retrieve it betimes, least our Hearts be hardned by the deceitfulness of Sin, and there be no more offers of Grace, nor Dispositions in us fit to be wrought upon by it. *Lastly*, That we remember with the utmost Gratitude, that whatever Good we proceed

to by the help of God's preventing and assisting *Grace*, that nothing has been imputable to our selves in the whole Work : but all due to God's supernatural Grace, preventing, and disposing our Natures, and capacitating of us for his higher Gifts. And now I come to the last part of the Text, and charge the Circumstance [*now*] denoting the present Necessity of Repentance, and implying the Danger of deferring it : And this *now* may be understood, either as it signifies the time of this Life, which is only seasonable for *Repentance* : Or secondly the *present Instant* ; which, because of the uncertainty of our Lives, is the most seasonable time for Repentance : Or thirdly most properly, as it signifies here in the Text the time of the promulgation of the *Gospel*, which came to preach *Repentance from dead Works, and Faith in Christ Jesus*. Many Questions may be raised concerning this *now* ; as first, why *Christ* should reveal himself to those *Gentiles*, and not unto others, they being alike faulty, and some of them worse than those to whom the *Gospel* was not revealed ? Secondly, why the *Gentiles* were not called as well before, as after the coming of *Christ* ? And thirdly, why *Christ* came not sooner than he did ; and truly, tho' it be safest not to usurp any Judgment in these matters,
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but with the profoundest Veneration to commit all to God: Yet some satisfaction may be given, why neither the *Gentiles* were called, nor *Christ* came sooner; and in order thereunto, you are to take notice, that besides those many *Prophecies*, foretelling the time of his coming, and consequently of their Conversion, which was to be by their being incorporated into the *Jews*, as is expressed in 2 *Eph.* 6. and the partition Wall being to be taken down by *Christ*, who is the *Corner stone* upon which both were to be built, himself descending both from *Jew* and *Gentile*, as you may see in *Ruth*, to shew that he was to be the *Saviour* of both. I say, besides all this, you are to consider, that there are several degrees of the Dispensation of Salvation. *First*, The ordaining of *Salvation*, which was before the World. *Secondly*, The promise of *Salvation*, which was when *Adam* fell. *Thirdly*, The procuring of *Salvation*, which was not till *Christ* came in the *Flesh*. *Fourthly*, The Promulgation and Enlargement of *Salvation*, which was not to be till after *Christ* was come in the *Flesh*. And *Lastly*, The present consummation of *Salvation*, which is to be in Heaven. Now the Execution of the Promise, and the performance of all good concerning *Salvation*, was reserved for *Christ's* coming
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in the Flesh ; the Enlargement of the Promise to all Nations was not till then ; and it may give some satisfaction also to that Question , why *Christ's* Incarnation was not sooner ? If we consider *first*, that there were many Preparatives to go before the Application of so sovereign a Medicine ; and it was necessary, that the Law, by making them sensible of their Wants, should fit them to receive *Christ*. *Secondly*, because, that if *Christ* had sooner taken our Nature upon him, it might have confirmed the *Gentiles* in their *Idolatry* ; because that they who were so prone to deifie *Men*, whom they thought more than ordinarily *deserving*, might, by being commanded to worship the *Son of God, made Man*, defend, and plead for their own *Idolatry*. But that which supersedes all Enquiries of this kind, is, that he then came *when the fullness of time was come* ; and that he by whom all things were made, knew the fittest time for his coming. And now having dispatcht the several parts of the Text, I shall close up all with a word or two of Application, and that is that we should consider with the greatest thankfulness, how Merciful God has been to *us* in these latter times above other *Gentiles*, in that we were Born in the time of the *Gospel*, and that we are *Christians*, and enjoy the means of Salvation ; and as we have received

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ceived more than others in being freed not only from *Heathenish Idolatry*: But also from our late Anarchy, and Schism in Religion, so we must be sure to make larger returns of Obedience and Holiness, and not tempt God by our despising the *Gospel*, to remove the means of Salvation from us. For God has not tied himself so immoveably to any Place, or Nation, but that he may, and will, if he finds his kindness abused, withdraw himself: And as he went to the *Gentiles* when the *Jews* rejected him, so he may if we despise the *Riches of his Grace*, depart from us to the *Americans*. And truly we have no less than just cause to fear that our unfruitfulness, and wilful Ignorance will be productive of some such fatal Judgment: For let me tell you, it is a very sad consideration, that we should live all this while under the blessed influence of the *Gospel*, and yet be as barren of good Works as if we were *Pagans*; and that there should be this only difference between us, and them here, that we have better helps to do well, and that they outdo us, even in the common Rules of Honesty, Justice, and Sobriety, and that there should be this difference between us, and them hereafter, that we shall be beaten with more, and they with fewer Strokes: But the Text makes a proposal of Peace, and Reconciliation to us from God; and therefore I shall

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not proclaim War, by insisting on these Corrosives. But desire you in the second Place, to consider, that it matters not what you have hitherto been, so you amend for the time to come. Thy former Sins, whether proceeding from Ignorance, or Wilfulness, *God* is ready to pardon; provided you now Repent: Therefore let me beseech you in *Christ's* stead, to pity your own *Souls*, and be reconciled to *God*, by Repenting of all your former Sins, and let not your *Repentance* be only sorrow for Sin, nor shedding of a few Tears when the kind fit is upon you, nor a faint resolution of Amendment squeezed from you by the *Rod* of Affliction, nor a sudden Resolution to abandon your Lusts, when the pains of your Bones Chastise you for the Sins of your Flesh: No, nor some steps towards an Holy Life, nor the total Mastery of any one beloved Sin; but let it be a perfect Abrenunciation of all Sin, and an honouring *God* with thy good Works, in proportion to the dishonour you have done him with your Sins, an hating of the Companions, and Issues of your Shame, and a sincere and impartial Obedience to *Christ* upon the terms of the *Gospel*, for the whole remanent part of our Lives; and we must not think that we have Repented enough, when we have sorrowed for our own Sins, unless we also endeavour

to bring them to Repentance, whom we have Debauched into a Partnership with us in our Sins, and this we are obliged to by the Rules of common Equity, and we are also bound by the Law of Charity, to endeavour the Reformation of all. O ! Therefore that the *Minister* would by his *Example*, as well as *Doctrine* infuse a Spirit of Holy Ambition, and Zeal for Religion into the People, and that the *Magistrate* by his *Power*, as well as by his personal *Piety*, would reform the Wicked, countenance the Religious, punish the Atheistical, discountenance the Prophane, and set Marks of Disgrace, and Infamy upon the Patrons of those fashionable Sins, of Debauchery, Duelling and Uncleanneſs, that have got away the name and reputation of Gallantry, that Men may not dread the Singularity of being Innocent. And that the Gentry would Repent of, and abstain from their best beloved Sins, those of their Youth, Complexion and Company, and that they would count it more Wisdom to sneak to Heaven in the common Road, with a poor despised Christian, than to strut to Hell with Gentlemen, and to be damn'd *Alamode*: And that all of them would endeavour after so much *Piety*, and Goodness, as may reform the Age, shame the Vices, puzzle the Virtues of their Equals, and reprieve the places where they
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Live, and not think themselves too *Young* to be Religious, nor too *Good* to profess it, nor think they can enjoy too much of *God*, nor serve him too *Long*, nor begin with him too *Soon*, since he is always best pleased with *tender* Sacrifices; and had rather have a drachm of *Flesh*, Youthful Holiness, than an ounce of decrepit bedridden Graces: And that the Covetous would quit their Idols of Gold, and Silver, their Extortion and Usury; and begin tho' but at last with the practice of Justice, Mercy, and Charity, to make some amends for their former failings, that thus every one of us assisting one another in this so necessary work of Repentance, may proceed an whole Army of Candidates for Heaven. and indeed till something be done this way, by us, we cannot in Reason expect that God will pass by our former Sins, or be reconciled unto us, and therefore let me beseech ye all, immediately to fall upon this so necessary a Work of Repentance, and not to flatter your selves with believing, that you shall have time enough for it, and so put Death far from your Thoughts, and when Age has snowed upon your Heads, that no decays of Nature may appear, think to make your Winter flourish with anothers Spring, for Death will find us under our Disguises, and will not stay beyond the appointed time: And

since this is so, let us apply our selves immediately, to this so necessary a Work; for the present time is only ours, and if we mispend that, we may not perhaps live to another Moment, and then our condition will be Remediless, in that we shall find it then too late to Repent. For if the Trumpet once calls to Judgment, there is no loitering; and if *Jacob* gets the Blessing, *Esau* shall not recover it tho' he seek it with Tears, and if the Sentence be once pronounced, against us, there is no reversing of it, and if the Doors be shut but never so little a while, tho' the *Virgins* knock never so loud, they shall not find Admission. Whereas they that every day make it their business to Repent, besides that they make it easie by proportioning it to their time, so they can never be surprised by Death, nor need longer time for Repentance, they may indeed stand in need of a little time, to trim and snuff their Lamps, to make them burn the brighter, and cast the greater Lustre, but they shall not need so much time, as to go seek for fresh Oyl to pour upon them. The result then of all is this, that seeing our Lives are full of uncertainties, and that deferring our Repentance, is the highest ingratitude imaginable against God, it being a despising, and a resisting of his Grace, and that every Man (for the truth of which I appeal to
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the Conscience of any one here present) upon deferring his Repentance, has found his Heart more hardened by his Sins, and more averse to Repentance, than it was before: And has not that God promis'd to stay one hour for our Repentance. I say all this being sadly and seriously considered, let us at this instant, because we are not sure of another) sincerely and stedfastly resolve to become new Creatures, and make what recompence we are able by an Holy Life for our former Sins, whether of Ignorance, or Wilfulness.

*Which God of his Mercy enable us all to do,
for his Son's sake, to whom with the Fa-
ther, and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour,
and Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.*

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DISCOURSE XI.

Of the Last Judgment.

Acts 17. 31.

Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordain'd, whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath rais'd him from the dead.

IT is the great Unhappiness and Perverseness of our Nature, that we have a far greater aversion to that which is distastful to us, than satisfaction in that which is pleasant; and are usually more sensible of the bitterness of the one, than apprehensive of the sweetness of the other; and hence it is, that we are more quick in re-

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senting of an Injury, than forward in acknowledging of a Benefit, and more feelingly displeased with Sickneſs, than contented with Health; becauſe Sickneſs is capable of little Comfort, and Health is ſeldom or never free from much Vexation; inſomuch that we ſhould never know how to put a right Eſtimate upon the latter, but by enduring the Pains and Twinges of the former; and ſo likewiſe, we are leſs affected with Liberty, than reſtrain'd with Rewards; than Punishments with the Hope of what is Good, than with the Fear of what is Evil; becauſe, Fear being a moſt powerful Paſſion, commonly overrules all our Actions, and chiefly moderates the whole Courſe of our Affairs. And therefore it is, (I conceive) that God (who never gave us any Paſſion, but in order as well to our own Good, as with reſpect to his Deſign) has not only in the former time of the *Law*, but alſo in this of the *Gospel*, choſen to make our *Fears* as inſtrumental to our ſerving him, as our *Hopes*; and therefore checquers out all his Diſpenſations, as if it were with *black* and *white*, thundering out ſometimes moſt dreadful *Threats*, as well as at other times offering moſt gracious *Promiſes*, that if the one, like green *Boughs*, does not lead to *Repentance*, the other, like *Nettles*, might ſting to *Obedience*. And tho' ſome are of opinion,

opinion, that these *Terrors of the Lord* are not so fit to work upon regenerate Men, Fear being too slavish a Passion for a Christian to entertain; and that the Love of God is a more proportionable Argument, and much nobler Disposition, and generous Temper, to be constrain'd by *Love*, or restrain'd by *Fear*: Yet I shall, besides the alledging the scarcity of such noble Natures, use no other Confutation, than putting them in mind of *St. Paul's Practice*, who may be presumed, would make use of no other Arguments, than such as were, and are still fit to be made use of by *Christians, even to those that had received the Kingdom that cannot be moved*; and he (I am sure) exhorts more than once after this manner, *work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*; and after he had declared that we must all appear before the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, he tells us, *that God is a consuming Fire*, that is, to all unmortified carnal Men, even now under the very *ἐπιείχεια* of the Gospel; and what a dreadful thing it is, to fall into the hands of the living God. And knowing these *Terrors of the Lord*, (says the same Apostle) *we persuade Men*, for *Fear is the beginning of Wisdom*, as the Prophet *David* terms it, and *Job* calls it *Wisdom it self*; and *Syracides* the *Fullness and Crown of Wisdom*. It is the first step that leads to Love, which is the accomplishment

plishment of the *Law*, and which growing together (at last as the Viper is destroyed by its own Issue) so it is cast out by its own Off-spring: and upon this account it is, that the Wise Man, knowing how great a Power *Fear* has in governing our Actions, tells us, that if we would but remember the three last things, that is, *Death*, *Judgment*, and *Hell*, we should never do amiss; and truly our own Experiences forces our Assent unto this Truth; whence it is plain, that if we but habituate our selves to such Meditations, we should discover in our selves those two best Effects of *Fear*, which the Scripture makes mention of, to hate *Evil*, and not to depart from *Good*; which is the very Design of the *Apostle* in his Discourse to the *Athenians*, and more particularly in this Text, where he enforces his former Doctrine of Repentance, and turning from their *Idolatry* to the true *God*, (of which I have formerly spoken in this place) he gives them for a reason of it, *Because*, says he, *he has appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World in Righteousness*, &c. The first Word (*Because*) sends us back to that which the *Apostle* said before in v. 30. as rendring some reason thereof, and that was his *Exhortation* to his *Judges*, and *Hearers*, to *repent*; and that being the principal Scope of the whole Discourse, he enforces it with

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two of the most powerful Motives that can be chosen, *Hope*, and *Fear*. He puts them in *Hopes* in the former Verse, when he tells them, that the time of their former *Ignorance* God *overlookt*, or *wink'd* at, and therefore did they now *repent* they were not to be charged with their former Sins; and now he puts them in *Fear*, by telling them of the last Judgment in the Words now read unto you, which are indeed of great Weight and Force to lead us to *Repentance*, often in the Mind and Mouth of the *Apostle*, both to the *Jew* and *Gentile*, as in his Speech before *Fælix*, Chap. 24, 25. 2 Cor. 4. 15. 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11. where he calls it *the terrors of the Lord*; and shews, that from the consideration thereof he is stir'd, and put on to the faithful discharge of his Duty, in perswading Men to a reconciliation with God; and in the second to the *Thessalonians*, he calls it *the righteous Judgment of God*, *recompensing retribution to them that trouble the Church in Flaming Fire*, and *rendering Vengeance to them that know not God*, and *obey not the Gospel*. We are therefore (*Christians*) fallen upon a point of some *terror*, but of great profit, and use. God assist me so to speak, and you to hear, as that we may have the benefit and comfort of it, both *now* and at that day. The Text then is to be considered two ways,
First,

First, Absolutely in it self, and *Secondly* with reference to the *Repentance* urged in the foregoing Verse, which is the use the *Apostle* makes of it here. The absolute acceptation of the words affords in these five particulars, *First*, That there shall be undoubtedly a final and general Judgment. *Secondly*, That God shall be Judge, and that in Christ as he is Man. *Thirdly*, That all the World shall be judged. *Fourthly*, That this Judgment shall be in Righteousness. *Fifthly*, That the Resurrection of Christ is sufficient Evidence to all Men, that Christ shall be Judge: And then the relative aspect of the Text yields us this other Conclusion, to wit, the Doctrine of the Last Judgment is a proper Argument to persuade all Men to Repentance. Of these in their Order; and First of the First Proposition arising from the absolute consideration of the Words, Namely, That there shall be a final and General Judgment: And truly were the Scriptures generally believed by all, it would be too much a *Parergon* to endeavour any other proof of this particular, than what the Text it self affords, seeing it tells us, that God has not only appointed, but, has also set a day, that is a certain prefixt limited time, which he has Decreed with himself, though not declared to others, to Judge the World, which

which is often in Scripture called *the day of the Lord*; and sometimes *that day*, without farther addition, 2 Tim. 1. 12. denoting the certainty of it, and is called the *hour of judgment*; and sometimes is of a secret *Censure*, and sometimes of a solemn and publick *Discussion*, and *Retribution*, including divers Acts, as Examining, Sentencing, and Punishing; all which will be exercised in this general Judgment specified in the Text. And as the New Testament does more than abundantly prove this, so likewise does the Old, by the Testimony of the Prophet David, who saith, *Verily there is a God that judgeth the Earth*. And Malachi, and Daniel, who say, *That he saw one like the Son of Man, coming in the Clouds with Power and great Glory*; and many other such Passages, all which were presignificative of this Last and General Judgment. But that which I most aim at, is to make this demonstrable, both from the Equity, and Nature of the thing it self, and to shew that the very *Heathens*, led thereunto by the Light of *Nature*, did fully attest this *Truth*. And tho' this might be collected from the Behaviour of the *Athe-nians*, at this Discourse of St. Paul's, where you may please to take notice, that when he began to speak of the
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Resurrection of the Dead, they began to mock him, as being a thing not intelligible by the light of Nature; but not any of them as taking the Judgment to come for a thing confess'd on all Hands, did in the least contradict it: But their silence is too weak a topick for us to draw this conclusion from: And therefore I shall put it out of all controversy by some more convincing Authorities drawn from their own Writings, and chiefly from *Platoes*, who speaks of the last Judgment in these words *εἰπετα γυμνὸς Κρίτον ἅπαντον τὸτον* that is they shall be judged divested of all these things: And he speaks more Expressly in his *Common-wealth*, of the manner of assigning rewards to the *Righteous*, and inflicting Punishments, on the *Wicked*, they, says he, that have excelled others in sanctity of Life, shall be freed from these *Terrestrial Weights*: And exalted to that more pure and holy Habitation, but as for such, as have not lived according to the Dictates of right Reason, they shall be punish'd, in a Lake of Fire where, says he *σχόληξ αὐτῶν ἔτελευτήσῃ καὶ πῦρ αὐτὸν ἔσβεσέῃ* that is their Worm shall never Dye, not their Fire be quencht, and many such passages I might produce, from *Lucian*, *Trismegistu*, *Lactantius's* Collections out of *Hydaspes* and the *Sybils*, and the Stories of the *Poets*, who

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tho' they have something obscured these *Truths*, by their false *Glosses*, and their additional *Fictions* of *Pluto*, *Stix*, *Acheron*, and the like; yet what they say will sufficiently evince the truth of this Proposition, because they do in part consent with the *Prophets*, and Holy Scriptures, which is enough for probation of the matter in Hand. And now if you please to add to their Suffrage, such Proofs as we may have from Reason, it will more then Demonstrate this truth; for the same principle that tells every Man of his Duty, does also assure him by the secret twinges of a troubled Conscience that usually ensues the committal of bad Actions, that he is to give a further account than he is to give here in this Life, and therefore does not only approve of his good Actions, and creates joy and quietness of Mind in him for performing them, but also disapproves of, and Condemns his evil Actions, and by a constant accusing of him, fills him with frightful apprehensions of future Terrors, and by this very manner of proceeding, the Conscience appears not so much to be our Judge as a Witness to give Evidence against us, at some Tribunal in another World, *For all Men* says the *Apostle* are a Law to themselves. Rom. 2. 15. and have the Works of the Law written in their Hearts,

Hearts, their Consciences also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts in the mean while accusing, or excusing one another in the Day when God shall Judge the secrets of Men. And if we but add to this, the consideration of God himself, his whole attributes so assert this truth, that it cannot be denied, without destroying his very *Essence*. *First*, because if there were no other *Judgment* to be after this Life, it would highly accuse God of want of Wisdom, in giving a *Law*, and prefixing a *Duty* to Mankind (as the *Apostle* said before *to see God*) and never to take an account of the performance of it. *Secondly*, it would call his Goodness and Providence into question, both for disposing the things of this Life, with so much advantage to the *Wicked*, and inequality to the *Righteous*, and for despising the sorrowful Sighing of the Prisoners, and Suffering his poor faithful Servants to be *Condemned*, *Persecuted* and *Slain* all the Day long, as Sheep appointed for the Slaughter, and never making them any suitable return of *Recompence*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It would charge his *Justice* with partiality; and it might be properly demanded, *hath the Judge of all the earth forgotten to do right?* If the cause that was ill judg'd before, were not to be heard over again, and receive a more Righteous Sentence, and if there were not some other place reserved for the injured Person to appeal to for Redress, that the Tyranny of Great Men might be called to Question, our Thoughts examined, and our secret Actions viewed on all sides, and those many heinous Crimes that go shot free here should escape Punishment eternally.

Fourthly and Lastly, It would highly Dero- gate from his *Honour*, which he has promised not to give to another, to neglect always the confused state of his whole Creation, subject by reason of Sin, to Vanity, Corruption and Disorder, and therefore *groaning together with the Children of God*, for Redemption, and a more solid State, and Condition, and to suffer *Satan*, and his Instruments to *Lord* it in the World, and not to beat down *Principalities*, and *Powers*, that he might render to his Servants the Rewards which he has promised, both which are joyn'd together in the ii. of the *Rev* 18. And now since we are thus, so well assured of the first Proposition, that there shall be a final Judgment proved by the Authority of the *Scriptures*,
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the Testimony of the *Heathens* themselves, and from the consideration of the internal power of *Conscience*; and the intuition of the essential Attributes of *God*, which are sufficient to convince all Men.

Our next Work is to consider, who shall be our Judge? And the second particular in the Text tells you, that *God* in *Christ* as he is *Man* shall be our Judge. And this I account is plain from these Words, *by that Man whom he hath ordained*. And here by the by I desire you to take notice of *St. Paul's* Prudence and Care, that his *Doctrine* might not be ineffectual, he passes by the *Divinity* of *Christ*, and insists only upon his Humanity, lest the *Athenians* should Scoff at him for this, as they did about the Resurrection, and so obstruct his endeavours of working them into a belief that he was the True *God*, and therefore he says only, *by that Man*. The Original has it the Man κατεξουειν — Which kind of construction in Holy Scripture is usually of the means, and instrument, but here there is no necessity to take it otherwise, than that *God* who is in the *Son of Man* Personally, shall Judge the World in *Christ*. For the Supream, Judicial, Autocratical Power is in *God*, whose right it is to Judge, as being their *Creator* and *Law-giver*, by which they are accountable to him for their Actions, and in this sense the whole

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Three-Persons have an equal Right and Power, as being equally *God* and *Creator of all*. But the *special* execution of this Judgment, is by a Delegated Power given expressly from *God*, and concomitantly from the *Holy Ghost* unto *Christ*, as he is *Man*, who has purchased this Power (and therefore cannot in justice be deprived of it) by those Sufferings he underwent for the Redemption of Mankind. For *John* 5. 12. *The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son*, that is the *Father* does it remotely, but the *Son* in the nearest Sense, whose Power is derived from the *Father*, and stands in Subordination to him, as to a Fountain or Efficient. Yet *Christ* has not this Power simply as he is the *Son of Man*; for if so, every *Man* should be Judge, and consequently none would be Judge. But because he only of the *Three Persons* that are *God*, is the *Son of Man*, and therefore for his participation of our *Nature*, *Sense* of our *Weakness*, and *Visibility* to our Eyes, is most fit to represent the greatest *Mercy* and *Lenity*, in that most *Just* and *Irrespective Judgment*. And therefore it is not only an Act of the greatest Justice towards *Christ*, that he should be thus Exalted, because of his great Humiliation, And That he that Drank of the Brook in the way should have his head lift up, but also it is a demonstration of the great-

est Mercy and Favour imaginable towards us, because that by this means he shall be seen by all that are to be judged, which could not be, if he were not to be our Judge as he is Man, for that the Righteous only would have the Satisfaction, and the Wicked would be deprived of it. For it is St. *Austin's* Expression that *Visio filii hominis exhibebitur malis, visio vero formæ divinæ non nisi mundis corde*, The Wicked shall see their Judge as he is Man: but the pure in Heart, shall see him as he is God. And thus having declared how we are to understand that *Christ* as *Man* shall be our Judge, which was the Second Particular, I come now to speak of the *Third* Particular, to wit, the object of this Judgment. And the Text tells you, that it is the *World*, the Continent, for the Contained, and it seems by another place, that the *Angels who kept not their first station*, shall pass through this Judgment also, for the *Apostle* says *they are kept in everlasting Chains of Darknes unto the Judgment of that day*. But we are only concerned for this *World*, which implies that all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam*, all States and Degrees of Men, Women and Children, without any difference of condition, from the greatest *Prince* that Sways the Scepter upon the *Throne*, to the meanest *Peasant* that handles the *Rake* and *Spade*, must appear in that Judgment: for all have
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one Duty to *seek God*, all are to be tried how they have performed that *Duty*, the distinction of Noble and Ignoble, of Small and Great, of Rich and Poor, of Just and Unjust, make no difference; for all, not one excepted, must undergo that Trial; neither have we cause to question this Truth, because our shallow Reason cannot apprehend where so great a number can be contained, and that it seems to require an infinite time to Judge so many Persons, and that it is impossible that all those that perisht by so many sorts of *Death*, should appear altogether; these are but trivial Objections, to any one who seriously considers the infinite Power of God, and deserve no other answer than contempt. Yet it may be offered, that the place of Judgment (which the Schoolmen say shall be Mount *Olivet*) as appears by the first to the *Thessalonians* and the 4th. *Shall be in the Air*, but whether this will, or will not, satisfy that part of the Objection, yet this may; that *God* who has appointed a *Judgment*, will also find a convenient place for it; and as for the time, it shall than cease to be, and the Lord, says *Tertullian*, *nullius in ore est conscius*, i. e. knows not how proceeding, and he that has decreed to Judge, will verify his Word, and he will for the convening of all and every individual, by the same Almighty Power, where-

by he Created all things of nothing, restore Mankind to its own proper matter, and by his Angels present them at the place of Judgment. And to this end, the Sea shall Vomit up her Dead, the Graves and Tombstones shall be hurl'd one against another, for to make way for their now Arraign'd Prisoners; and the Earth shall suffer strange Convulsions, and be violently torn asunder by a more numerous Offspring than that of *Cadmus*. And if there ever was a colour for asserting *Democritus's* Opinion, it will be then, when every small Dust, and little Atom, hastening to come to Judgment, shall be joyned together for the recomposing of those Bodies, of which they were once a part, that they may be united to their *Souls*, and receive a final Determination, and be actually in Soul and Body jointly disposed to their Eternal State and conditions. It is our duty therefore to believe this Divine Truth, and to apply it to our selves, *we*, all *we*, that are here this day, a *part* of this *World*, shall be a part of that *Judgment*. Let us make sure account of that, and prepare our selves for it accordingly: Which that we may the better do, let us now consider the *manner*, which is the most Tragical part of the day, and the *Fourth* particular in the Text, to wit, in *Righteousness*. Which Words do not only imply, that he
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will Judge without Injustice, and Wrong, nor with Justice without Equity: but with *Mercy* also to some, as is clear by the 2d. to *Timothy* 4. 18. and it includes these three things, *First*, Due information of the *Cause*. *Secondly*, just Sentencing of it according to *Law*. *Thirdly*, Just execution of the *Sentence*. As to the First the *Apostle* teaches elsewhere, that there shall be a manifestation of Mens Works, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *God will reveal the council of their hearts*, and 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. *We must all be laid open before the Judgment Seat of Christ*; and we shall be turned as it were the inside outward; our midnight Revels, and closest Filthiness, shall be exposed to the view of all. And to this purpose, not only the *Devil* and his *Angels* will accuse us of those very Sins we committed by their Instigation: And the Elect *Angels*, or as *Origen* has it, our *Angel Guardians*, shall inform the *Judge* of those Crimes which we committed in spite of all their dissuasions. But that which is yet most amazing, our *Consciences* shall be our fiercest Accuser, and this Implies these two things. *First*, That we shall be Condemned for the Evil we have done, and the Dust being wiped off the Table of our Memories, we shall at one instant remember all those Sins, wherewith we gratified our prurient Appetites, with
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their several aggravating Circumstances, and be compell'd to bring Glory to God, by confessing them with our own Mouths, and so verify God's Oath, *That every mouth shall confess him, as well as every knee bow to him*: And Secondly, It signifies that we shall not only acknowledge the Justice of God in our Punishment; but shall receive the Sentence into us, to melt our very Bowels within us, and break our very Hearts in pieces, because we shall then understand that we our selves are the cause of our Misery, and Lastly, the Judge himself shall Accuse us, and set in order before us, those Sins which we seem to have forgotten. *Matth. 25. 44.* And shall force the Evidence beyond all possibility of Denyal, and so too, as not to use any articulate voice of Words: For as the *Angels* are able to signify their Intentions to one another, and as *God* spake unto them and to the *Devil*, *Job 1.* without any Sound of Words, so he will effect this in that day. Then he will testify against us, all our sins of Ingratitude, that tho he redeemed us by his Death, and purchased us by his Blood, for a peculiar people to himself, and gave us *an easy Yoke, a light burthen*, and a gracious *Law*, and abilities to perform what he required, that we notwithstanding all this, threw his Laws behind our backs, brake our

Baptis-

Baptismal Now, and instead of Fighting under his Banners, Revolted to the Enemies Quarters, and became Volunteers to the *Devil*; then shall he charge us with our Hipocrisy and Uncharitableness, that we neither Clad him being *Naked*, nor Fed him being *Hungry*, nor Visited him being *Sick* and in *Prison*, then he will Judge us for our Pride and Ambition; for our Covetousness, and Uncleaness, for our Treachery, and Perjury, for our Boisterous Oaths, and Terrible Execrations, for our Detracting, and Backbiting practices, for our neglect of Duty, and contempt of Ordinances, for an Irreverent Deportment, and wilful Slighting of that Majesty that fills Heaven, and this place. And we shall be further Accused for our wilful Murdering of those many that Sinned by our Example. And *Lastly*, he will accuse us for Dethroning *Christ*, and prostituting him to all the *Shame* and *Scandal of the Cross*. And all this for no other purpose (since we would not suffer our selves to be benefitted by him) then as it were, to insult over the Blood of the Covenant, and to despight the *Spirit of Grace*. And therefore when not only all this, but infinitely more shall be laid to our Charge, and that we might have purchased *Heaven* upon easier Terms, than we have acquired *Hell*, I say when
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this shall be exhibited against us by our Judge, there needs no other Sentence, we shall condemn our selves with a dreadful Amazement, to consider, how good and gracious God has been unto us, and how base and cruel we have been to our selves. And now that the Evidence is thus brought in, and submitted unto, the *Sentence* follows, but because it is not fit to condemn a Man, before he has Law, and Liberty of Defence, therefore I shall shew you by what *Law* God will proceed, and what Liberty of Defence shall be given, and therefore as the Parties to be tried are of different sorts, and their Offences of diverse Natures, so they shall be tried by several *Laws*, and have Liberty of diverse Defences, as by the *Gospel*, and the *Written Law*, and by the *Law of Nature*, for such who believed not the *Gospel* revealed to them, shall be judged by it, *John 12. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my Words, hath one that judgeth him, the Words that I have spoken, shall judge him in the last Day.*

And they that had the *Law* written and yielded not Obedience to it, shall perish by that *Law*, and such as had not this *Law*, *But the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, and hold the Truth of God in Unrighteousness*, shall perish without the *Law*, *Rom. 12.* And they that have obeyed

obeyed the *Gospel* as it enjoyns all them, to whom *Christ's* Death and Obedience has been apply'd, for translating them from *Death* to *Life*, shall be acquitted, and they that are not found in *Christ* with the *Righteousness which is by Faith in him*, shall be condemn'd, or rather are so already, by the Evidence of Fact and Law, tho' the Sentence be not pronounced: For every one is consign'd at the Instant of his Departure out of this Life, either to *Bliss* or *Misery*. And the Soul having practis'd some Vices or Vertues, in which the Body did not concur, does either enjoy Pleasure, or endure Pain, without the Body, until this great and general Judgment; in which Soul and Body are to be jointly judged, *ut pars communitatis*, as *Durand* calls it, as it was before *ut persona singularis*. And have their Rewards or Punishments, respectively assign'd to them. And tho' all are to undergo the Judgment of *Retribution*, that is, either be rewarded or Punish'd: yet it is the Opinion of the *School-men*, that none shall pass thro' the Judgment of *Discussion*; but they whose good Works are allay'd with some Mixture of Evil, or whose *Evil* Works are something abated by a less Degree of *Good*, and both these shall pass thro' a most strict Scrutiny and Enquiry, that the Justice of the Sentence

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tence that shall pass upon them, may be evident to all, and the Proceedings will be so just, that tho' it will hinder none, from making what Defence they can, yet it will not avail to say, Alas ! Lord, Faith is thy Gift, hadst thou given it me I should have believed, as well as this other, who can resist thy will ? If Thou art pleased to cast me away, if thou didst before all Worlds appoint me to *Wrath*, How could I but *perish* ? To such it shall be answered. If thou was call'd by the Voice of the *Gospel*, thy Perdition is of thy self, not only because thou hast lost thy first Integrity in *Adam*, but because thou hast abused the *Law*, and rejected the *Gospel*. Which if thou hadst embraced, as thou wast enabled by God's preventing Grace to have done, Faith would have been given to thee also ; if not, God at least never absolutely decreed thee to *Hell*, without Respect to thine own Desert, not for his more Pleasure but for thy Sins. And as for his Mercy to another *is thy Eye Evil*, because he is good ? Shew wherein he is thy Debter, and he will pay thee. Even those very still born *Babes* that never had the use of their Reason, (tho' their Condition will be more tollerable) shall have their Mouths stopp'd for that they are not such as their Creator

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made their kind to be, but of the corrupt Seed of *Adam*. I omit the several Pleas of kindred, Acquaintance and Miracles which shall have suitable Answers. And therefore must submit to the *Sentencing according to Law*, which was the second thing implied by *Judging in Righteousness*.

And this Sentence shall jointly pass upon the *Elect* and the *Reprobate*, as appears by the *Twenty fifth of St. Matthew*, *Come ye Blessed, go ye Cursed*, and tho' it will carry Horror enough with it, It shall be allay'd with much *Mercy*, not only to an *Oenesephorus*, or the Righteous, but even to a *Judas*, or the Wicked: for the *One* shall find *Mercy* in that they are forgiven their first Sins, and shall receive the Reward of their Obedience, which shall be manifested to their Praise, and Glory infinitely above their Merits, notwithstanding their Daily Infirmities: And the *other* shall find this *Mercy*, that they are not dealt with according to the utmost of their Demerit, tho' they be not then vouchsafed Pardon, which in this Life only, they were capable of; for every thing has its appointed time. Now is the Day of Salvation, then of Judgment, and they especially shall be sure to find no *Mercy*, that would shew none here, *James 2, 13*. And now after this Sentence is irreversibly pronounced by the Judge, the *Execution* which was the third thing

thing implied by Judging in *Righteousness* immediately follows; and without doubt the Condition of the *Persons*, and Nature of the *Offences* shall add to the Degrees of the Torment, greater Sins shall have greater Punishments, and greater Faithfulness greater Rewards, many Stripes, and fewer Stripes. It would be injurious to your Patience to represent this in more Minute Particulars. Therefore I shall only tell you, that this *Sentence* shall be executed principally, by *God* himself; but more immediately by the *Devil*, and his *Angels*, and their own *Consciences*. Nay, the glorified Saints, and Angels in Heaven, shall help to execute this *Sentence* on the *Wicked*, for that the Consideration of their Happiness will beget a gnawing *Remorse*, and a never Dying *Envy* in the Spirits of the *Damn'd*, and as their Punishment shall be thus inflicted, and rendered intollerable by their own Reflections, so the Joys of the Blessed shall be so transcendently great, by satisfying all the Desires of Souls enlarg'd from their Restraints, and made more capable of receiving a more compleat and full Measure of Glory, that it exceeds all Possibility of Expression, nay, of Imagination.

And this brings me to the last Particular in the Text, as it is absolutely considered to wit, that the *Resurrection of Christ* is a
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sufficient Argument to convince all Men, that he shall be the Judge. For the Text says, *whereof he has given Assurance unto all Men in that he hath raised him from the Dead.* The Original has it *πιστιν ὡς ἔσται*, yielding Faith which is not to be taken for a *Sum* or *Symbol* of Faith; but for an argumentative Faith, to prove the thing in *Question*, and does imply thus much, that God has given sufficient Demonstration unto all Men, that *Christ* shall be the *Man* by whom he will Judge the World. For as much as he has for Confirmation thereof, rais'd him also the first Fruits of the Resurrection unto Eternal Life. For the *Apostle* tells you in the 14th to the Romans and 9th Verse, *That to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead, and the living.* And that this Argument is convincing, will be easily manifested, if it be but granted that *Christ* rose again, which cannot be denied without overthrowing all those Authorities upon which the Proofs of the most known, and generally received Truth does depend; for this is Matter of Fact, and cannot stand upon surer Grounds, not only in respect of those many *Prophecies*, and *Types* that did foretel and pre-figure the Resurrection, but also in respect of the Testimony of God himself, who did by his *Angel* assure
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the *Women* of it that went to see the Place whence he rose, and by the concurring and joint Evidence of 500 *Disciples* at one time, who could have no Design to impose the Belief of this (if it were an *Imposture*) upon the World, since it oblig'd them to all the Hardships and Miseries, that Unbelieving and Tyrannical Men could inflict upon them. And that which is yet most convincing, (because asserted by his Enemies) the very *Soldiers* that were set to watch the Sepulchre did attest it, and *Pilate* himself as *Egesyppus* relates, wrote a Letter to *Tiberius Caesar*, declaring his Belief of his *Resurrection*. Now then, God having foretold that *Christ* should rise the *Third Day*, and having also foretold that he should judge the World, the Truth of the Event of the one, must needs be a full Perswasion, and sufficient Conviction of the Certainty of the other. And thus having, as briefly as I could, dispatch'd the several Propositions arising from the absolute Consideration of the Words. First, That there shall be a final Judgment. Secondly, That God in *Christ* as he is man, shall be the judge. Thirdly, That all the world shall be judg'd. Fourthly, That this Judgment shall be in Righteousness. And lastly, That the Resurrection of *Christ* is a sufficient Argument to convince the World, that *Christ* shall be the judge. I shall now speak

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Speak two or three Words to the last Proposition arising from the relative Aspect of the Text, namely, *That the Doctrine of the last Judgment is a most proper Argument, to perswade all Men to Repentance.* And then I shall dismiss you with a few Considerations necessary for your Practise. And that this is so, is demonstrable from the very Nature and Constitution of Man; because that every Man has two Appetites the *Concupiscible*; and the *Irascible*: And as by the *One* he is moved to endeavour the Acquiring of whatever is Beneficial unto him, and therefore desirable, so by the *other* he is incited to avoid whatever is prejudicial unto him, and therefore repugnant to his *Nature*. Being excited to the one by the Desire of *Good*, and to the other by the Fear of *Evil*. Now the last Judgment being acknowledg'd as a thing most certain, unavoidable, and also terrible; because of the Strictness of the *Account* that must be given, and Severity of the *Punishments* that are consequent thereunto, the Passion of *Fear* being always employ'd about an Evil that is future, unavoidable and near, must needs force us to *Repentance*: That we may thereby escape the Evil of it, since it self can by no means be avoided, and this is clear from St.

Paul's Practise with Felix, who trembled at the Judgment to come. (and without doubt) Would have been drawn on to Repentance, had he not wilfully stifled the Checques of his own Conscience. And our Saviour himself confirms this Truth by telling us of Woes, under the Gospel, and of Casting into utter darkness, where the worm never dieth, and the fire is never quench'd, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the Living God, and to be grown'd to powder with that fall, and which of them can dwell with everlasting burnings, all used by the Holy Ghost to frighten us into Repentance and Amendment of Life; so that from these and many such other Passages of Scripture, we may infer, that no Article in the Creed, no part of Christian Religion, no Argument in the whole Book of God is so proper to perswade us to Repentance, as that of the Judgment to come. As for that Palliat Cure of Healing and not Searching of Wounds, of Preaching Assurance of present Pardon, before Reformation be wrought, It is not the Method that St. Paul, that Christ uses, their safe Medicinal Way is to apply Corrosives and Caustics, The terror of the Lord, the fire of the Lord, and the judgment to come, this Course will force Men

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to make Heaven at least their *Refuge*, if not their *Choice*, and to live Religiously, if not for the Love of Vertue, yet for Fear of Punishment, and perhaps if he had used a more mild way, *Denis the Areopagit*, *Damaris*, and those others, that were converted by his Sermon, would not have forsaken their *Idolatry*. And truly, that this is so, is so clear from our own Experience, in that we are apter upon our Apprehensions of some imminent Punishment, for our Sins, to live more Religiously than at other times, and from the Practise of our *Apostle*, and our *Saviour* himself, that I cannot imagine what can be alledged against it. Therefore I shall not bring further Evidence, least I should overfet the Proposition, and cause it to be suspected by too laborious a Proof, but shall wind up all with some more useful Considerations, necessary for our Practise: And the most important and obvious Consideration that the Text affords is, that since it is most certain, that there shall be a general Judgment, wherein Christ shall judge the World with Righteousness, that is, with Justice, and an Impartial Spirit, rendering to every Man according to his Works; that we make that use of this Doctrine, which St. Paul design'd, and the Text too, and that

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that was to work the *Athenians*, and all others to Repentance, as a Furtherance to his former Admonition, and Message from God, rendring the Words of the Text as the Reason of his Charge. I say, let us make the same Use of it, and be thereby perswaded to repent, and to amend immediately. God tells us here of his *Judgment*, that we might rather prove his *Mercy now*, than his *Justice then*: And the Church has this very Sunday join'd the Meditation of his *second Coming*, with that of his *First*, that *all our Songs might be of Mercy and Judgment*, and that while we think on the *one*, we might rejoyce, and be thankful, and while we expect the *other* we might fear, and live accordingly. Therefore let us be perswaded by him, and as the very Form of the Term implyes, for the Time past, let us forethink with Shame and Grief, what we have done. How we have *Dis honoured* that Name, by which we are called, how ungrateful we have been to that *Christ* that *redeemed* us by his *Death*, and desires our Obedience for no other end; but that we may be happy. And how often we have stifled the Motions of his Holy *Spirit*, still calling upon us, for *Amendment* of Life, and suffered him to stand
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at the *Door* of our Hearts, to see if we were at Leisure to give him Admission, and yet forc'd him to go away, not in the least Regarding him, when at the same time we yielded to the Temptation of the *Devil*, and entertained his Suggestions. Let us judge our selves for these and all other our Sins, acknowledging ourselves worthy to be cut off for them, and confess them humbly to *God*, and beseech him for *Christ's* sake, to pardon them and shew our Gratitude by the future Holiness of our Lives, for that he has given us so long a time of *Repentance*, and did not cut us off, in the very Act of our Sins, and so enhance our Punishment, by surprising us in the very Height of our Pleasure, with a sudden and unexpected Damnation. And let not the Exemption from Punishment which we have hitherto had, cheat us in a Belief, that *God* will for ever forbear striking. For, when his Mercy is abused, it will turn into the greatest Fury. And I am sure, there is not any of us, if we reflect upon that Providence, which governs us in secret, but shall confess that his Spirit has a long time contended with us, and therefore may justly fear, that if we do not repent, that he will strive with us no longer,

longer, but utterly destroy us. For let me tell you, never any cross Accident beset any of us; but it was to put us upon Examining the Evil of our ways, that we might forsake them. But if all his Compassion, and kinder Dealings cannot prevail upon us, believe it, he will make Use of his Rods of Scorpions, to force and compel us. Or that which is the heaviest Judgment of all, he will let us go on in our Sins, give over striking, and dismiss us with a *behold you Despisers and wonder, and perish.* And as we are thus to forethink what we have already done, so *Secondly*, let us for the time to come resolve against all Occasions of Sin, so that by our joining Amendment of Life for the Future, to our Sorrow for our past Sins, *We may become new Creatures, perfecting Holyness in the Fear of God.* And to this End let us often think upon the Certainty of a future Judgment; and reflect upon the Horror and Amazement which it will put the Guilty into, and that we may not say in our Advowry for Sin, that its Pleasures are present, whereas its Punishment being at a Distance, and wrapt up in Futurity, will not be so grievous to us, as the Want of the Enjoyment of our present Pleasures,

fares, do but fancy now as strongly as you can, that the Great Day of Recompence is at hand, and that God is now *stretching upon us the lines of confusion, and the stones of emptiness*, and let us suppose that the *Sun* is now withdrawing its Light, and the *Moon* putting on the Bloody Colours of the Day, that the *Earth* is violently torn from her Center, and the whole *World* offer'd up, as an *Holocaust* to Honour the Approaching of this Judge. And let us examine our selves; whether in such a Case we should be affected with strange Transports of Joy, for that the time of our Redemption is at hand, or with Horror and Confusion, calling upon the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon us, and to *hide us from the wrath of the Lamb*, and the *face of him that sits upon the throne*. Believe it, if we find our selves affected neither after the one, or the other manner, but hovering in a trembling *Quandary* between both. It highly concerns us to *pass the time of our sojourning here with fear, and to wait all the days of our appointed time, till our Change come*. And earnestly endeavour by the Sincerity of our Obedience, *while it is to day, to make our Calling and Election sure*. And since it is probable, that many had never gone to *Heaven*,

if they had not believ'd a *Judgment to come*, let even this unworthy Servile fear, cooperate with God's *Grace*, to drive us to *Salvation*; and let not the Commonness of our Belief of a future *Judgment*, lessen the Horror wherewith we ought to entertain it, and so cause us to procrastinate our Repentance, and Preparation for it; and let not our Unwillingness to part with our beloved Sins, put us upon discouraging our selves into Atheistical Doubtings of it: Least we arrive at last at that unfortunat Science, of not knowing its Terrors, and other ways, than by our proper Experience. And if there be any such practical *Atheist* amongst us, that denies a *Judgment to come*, and would blind God as the *Jews* did *Christ*, not so much out of an ill Will to strike him, as to keep him from seeing how to strike them, let them not propagate this Damnable Doctrine to others, if they will not renounce it themselves, for this Reason, because the Belief of a God and a *Judgment to come*, makes most for their own Interest, because their dearest Cupidities being equally con-natural to all Men, this Belief restrains many from the same Pursuit, and so permits them by freeing them from a Number of Competitors,

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to possess a Fuller, and a more illimited Enjoyment of their Pleasures. And *Thirdly*, That we may be prepared for this *Judgment*, let us consider the *Justice* and *Severity* of the *Judge*, that is to pass Sentence upon us. For tho' he is merciful as our *Saviour*, and therefore while *Judgment* waited upon *Mercy*, used all means to lead us to *Happiness*, yet then his *Mercy* will yield unto *Justice*, and he will be a *Lion* as well as a *Lamb*, and so impartial unto all, that we may well ask with *Job. 31. 14.* *What then shall we do, when God riseth up, and when he visiteth what shall we answer him.* Seeing he will be inflexible, and inexorable, not to be won by *Entreaties*, nor to be corrupted by *Bribes*. But will make all those very Considerations, by which he was formerly induced to commiserate our Condition, the greatest Motives to enhance our Punishment. And therefore to conclude all in a Word, let us from this very Instant resolve to become new Creatures, and since God has overlook'd the time of our former Ignorance, let us not provoke him by new Sins to charge us with all that we have been formerly Guilty of. Believe it, if we do know this for a Certainty, that God himself shall laugh at our Calamities,

ties, the *Devils* shall insult over us, and shall upbraid us with *folly*, for coming into the *Flames*. And *Christ* himself shall add to the Excess of your Torments, and your own *Consciences* shall compleat your Misery, by putting you in Mind, that you were this very Day forwarned, and shall free all others, from having the least Hand in your Punishment, by imputing your *Damnation* solely, to the abused Liberty of your own Wills. And therefore let me once more beseech you in *Christ's* stead, for the avoiding all this Misery, which is hastening upon you. Do not any longer halt between two, nor look upon these Exhortations, as the *Ministers* Trade, and their great *Diana* to get a Livelyhood by, but as the unavoidable and irreversible Decree of *God's* own Mouth, and that since as the *Apostle* *St. Peter* tells you, that the *Day of the Lord* shall come like a thief in the Night; in which the *Heavens* shall pass away with great noise, the *Element* shall melt with fervent heat, and the *Earth*, and the works that are thereon, shall be burnt up, that you would seriously (as the same *Apostle* exhorts) consider what manner of Persons you ought to be, in all Holy Conversation and Godly-
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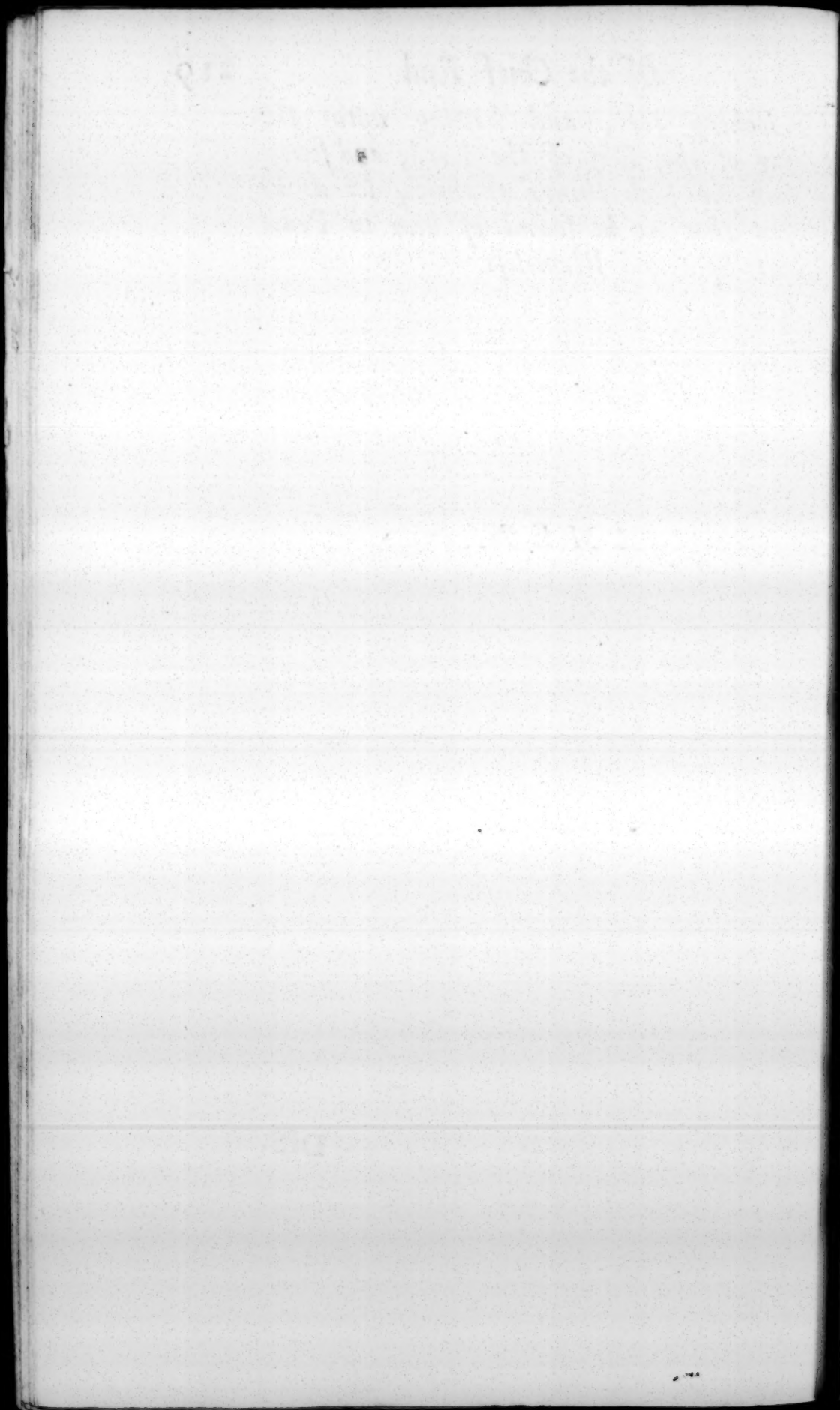
Of the Chief End

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*are looking for, and hasting unto the
Coming of the Day of the Lord, and seeing
we look for such things as these, let us be
diligent that we be found of him in Peace
without Spot and Blameless.*

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DISCOURSE XI.

*Of the three different
sorts of St. Paul's
Auditors at Athens.*

Acts 17: 32, 33, 34.

And when they heard of the Resurrection of the Dead, some mocked, and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them, howbeit, certain Men clave unto him and believed; among which was Dionysius the Areopagit, and a Woman named Damaris, and others with them.

THE Wise Man says, *Ecclesiasticus* 7. 8. That the end of a thing is better than the beginning, which if it be universally true, of all things, without exception, we are come
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Of the Three different sorts of

this day to receive the greatest profit of the *Apostles* defence of himself at *Athens*, related by *St. Luke* in the Verses preceding the Text, now read unto you. But if there be any difference of goodness, in the words of *Wisdom*, the end is called better than the beginning; for as much as we ought always to bring a fresh Appetite to them, and be sorry they end so soon, rather than think the time long till they end. And this is so, because the Truth which is the End of *God's Word*, is seldom ever perfectly attain'd to here; but that of *Ecclesiasticus* takes place, which he saith of the Work of God, *Chap. 18. 6. When a Man hath done, then he beginneth, and he shall be doubtful when he leaveth off.*

However, the End is the proper place of the surety of the whole, as *God's Example* in the several days of his first Weeks Work, and as the whole of it in the End does shew. Let us therefore see what we have heard in the History, and what remains in the winding of it up; we have therefore seen and discoursed of *St. Paul's Affection*

Affection when he came to *Athens*, he was troubled and moved, when he saw the People enthralled to *Idolatry*, and have also seen the course he took, disputing with the *Jews* in their *Synagogues*, and withal, how he encountered in the Publick places of the City, according to the Custom of *Philosophers*, two Different Sects, the *Epicureans*, who made Sensual Pleasure their *ultimate* End; and the *Stoicks*, who made Virtue their chief aim.

Whereupon he was called in Question, and brought before the College and Judges of *Areopagus*, and accused as a Setter-forth, and Asserter of Strange Gods. And he makes his Defence, and with a Wise and Discreet Preamble, he gains their Attention, by giving them this Commendation, That they had more Fear towards God than others. As the *Greek* Word which our *English* cannot so happily express, does impart.

For he relates how he found an *Altar* to the *Unknown God*, and takes occasion from thence, without altering the foundation of the Controversy, now, and at other times,

Of the Three different sorts of

times, to inform them of the Knowledge of the True God; he tells them, That he is *Creator* of All, and Lord of All, and therefore *has no need of Temples, Altars, or Images*; That he made Man, whose Story and Pedigree he acquaints them with, *That they are all of one Blood*, have one End, and one Employment, *to seek God*, a task not so very difficult, seeing he offers himself so Familiarly and Evidently unto us. Whereupon concluding, he exhorts all with God's Message to *Repent*, using as motives thereunto *God's Patience and Mercy in Forgiving all that is past*, and the present Grace of the Gospel, offering Repentance to all; and as the principal motives to this Repentance, the Doctrine of the Last Judgment, the *Time* thereof *set*, the *Men*, the *World*, the manner with *Righteousness*, the Judge not named but proved to be *Christ* by his *Resurrection* from the Dead. And here you may observe his Direction and Prudence that he leaves them to inquire further who this *Judge* shall be.

This is the Tenor of St. *Paul's* Oration, of which I have already particularly Discoursed; I will not trouble

trouble you with any further repetition, but shall now proceed to the Sequel, and Success which is here annext by St. Luke in these words of the Text, *and when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, &c.* the words have no other Difficulty in them than what shall be cleared in the handling of them; they contain the Success and Issue of St. Paul's Discourse with three sorts of Hearers, the two first chiefly, his *Judges, Stoicks, and Epicures*, that it may appear how himself sped; and the third sort, that it may appear how they behaved themselves. The *first*, and *second* sort, both seem to have stumbled at the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*: And truly it is no wonder that they who only consult their own reason, should be startled at a Doctrine that is so contrary to Sense, and that has so little support from their Suppositions of *Philosophy*: But if they had insisted upon this, the *Apostle* could easily have cleared it; for why should it be accounted incredible that God could raise the Dead, since that Omnipotent Power that made all things of nothing, may as well restore things out of their own proper remains, to their former being. And over and above this, he might have proved it by the Testimony of those that had both seen *Christ* before, and after his *Resurrection*, and his many infallible Appearances which

he relates to King *Agrippa*, and many other Reasons which I shall not now insist on. But Generally we may Observe, that it is no small furtherance to Christian *Piety*, to inform, and resolve our selves well, about the *Resurrection*; for this Article being either not understood at all, or misunderstood, makes many *Mockers* at *Religion*, and more of no Religion at all: for if we have no further Accounts to make than what we have in this World, we need provide for no other; and they that deny themselves the Pleasures of this Life, because they Expect that these Bodies moulder'd into Dust and Ashes, shall again be reunited to their Souls, and receive, at the General *Resurrection*, according to the Good or Evil they have done in this *Life*, if there were no *Resurrection* to be, justly deserved to be mocked, and he alone were to be counted the only wise, and prudent man, that took his full swing in sensual Pleasures, and made it his only business to gratifie every Appetite, by denying himself nothing that he could desire: But there is no reason to make a Mock or Scorn of this Doctrine, in which there is neither Folly nor Impossibility, which are the usual occasions of Mocking; neither is there any thing in it unbecoming *God*, or unwelcome to Man, or disagreeing with the sacred *Scriptures*, or the mo

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strict sort of that Age. The *Pharisees* and *Essenes* allowed it, only the *Sadduces*, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God, denied it. But here I must answer an Objection, which some not unwise Men make, and which too many loose Livers, (that they may have some pretence for their dissolute and debauch'd way of Living) are wont to take up, to wit, that there are many Learned Men, and great Scholars that read the Scripture, and Antiquity, that search into the deepest Mysteries of Nature, who have Souls to save as well as others, and they therefore would not damn themselves; and such were St. Paul's Judges, and the *Sadduces*, who, to this Day, read the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* from their Cradles: And the *Turks* too are desirous of the Truth, and their *Understanding* cannot entertain *Falsbood*, knowing it to be so, whatever pretence they make; and yet they deny the *Resurrection*. In answer to which, I must first tell you, that it is neither Wit nor Learning, nor a natural love to Truth, that the Conversion of a Sinner stands in, but the *Grace of God*, for not many wise, nor many learned, are our Saviour's own words, *And I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast bid these things from the Wise and Learned: It is the*

Grace of God that brings Salvation, by teaching to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts. It is that which opens the Heart, to attend and to give heed to the Word, as in *Lidia*, Chap. 16. 14. that opens and softens the Heart, that is capable of receiving Divine Impressions; whereas the more natural Man receives not the things of God; and no marvel that they mock at them, and count them foolishness, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Secondly, Another reason of it is, because Custom is so great a Tyrant, that whatever Opinions Men have once imbib'd and inured themselves to, they cannot be easily drawn from them: And tho' they appear very absurd to an impartial Observer, yet they see not the absurdity of them; and as a Branch that grows crooked, cannot be easily made strait; so they are (if at all) not without much difficulty, rectified in their Opinions. Thirdly, They who are interested cannot bear with patience to be thwarted in their Opinions, as our Saviour in *St. John*. *Why do you not understand, ye cannot hear my words.* And this is the Practice of the Church of Rome, which because several of its Tenents, as *Purgatory*, *Indulgences*, and the like, are profitable, the great Masters of the Church, make their Scholars study Way and Devices, and Distinctions to justify

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that (which they are convinc'd in their Consciences is *Erroneous*) because it is *profitable* : And truly this may be assign'd as one cause of the *Unconformists* separating from us ; because their Teachers reap advantage, by keeping their Hearers ignorant of the *Doctrines* of our *Church* ; and for their own particular Temporal Advantage, frighten them from our Communion, which falsely imputing Popery and Superstition to it, just as Children are scar'd with Bugs and frightful Stories. This may be also seen in *Demetrius* and his Fellow-Tradefmen, who defended *Diana*, because they reaped Profit by making Silver Shrines to her. Well therefore, to conclude this Point, let us not be so barbarous and irreligious, as not to hear God's *Word* without scoffing at it, tho' it seem never so contrary to our Opinions or Reasons, for fear Wisdom another Day scoff at us, *and laugh at us when our Calamity comes.* And let me tell you, (that tho' I am confident there is not any so notoriously wicked) as to make a Mock directly at God's Word, when it is either read or preach'd unto them : Yet every one of us that goes on in a prophane course of *Life*, tho' we come to this place, and bear an outward respect to his Ordinances, do no better, (as long as we are

not mended by it) than make a mock at it; and they too are, perhaps, the greatest Scorners of all, forasmuch as they know their Master's Will, and do it not, and such you know (the Scripture says) *shall be beaten with many Stripes*: And as we are not to scoff at God's Word, so, in the second Place, we must not suffer our selves to be scoff'd out of our Religion, by the scornful Spirits of this Age, who will not have others better than themselves, and despise the humble, the penitent, and the meek Man; not because they inwardly disapprove of his Piety, but because they cannot attain to it themselves; and therefore would not have their own Lives reprov'd, by their Vertues: And let us also obtain this just Favour from our Brethren, that are otherwise perswaded, that before they condemn us, or obstinately persevere in their own Ways, to hear and prove all Things; if this Course were taken by the Nonconformists, as well their Teachers as Hearers, they would not rail at, and condemn our manner of Worship, before they thoroughly and seriously examin'd it, and certainly, it will be a severe Accusation and Charge, at the *Day of Judgment*, that Thousands of them have cry'd out at our manner of Worship, and prejudiced others against it, that never took Pains to

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know what it is ; and I do appeal to some here present , whether they have not heard some preach against our Common Prayer-Book, who confest, they had never seen it. This is to shoot at all Adventures, which may as well hit a Friend, as an Enemy ; and thus much of the first sort of Mockers. The second sort, are such as receiv'd not the Apostle's Teaching, and they are *Deferrers*, *we will hear thee again of these things*. And truly, this has more shew of Wisdom and Moderation, than the former ; for if they understood not the Doctrine, they were to be better informed about it, before they could embrace it ; for no Man is required to use that Violence upon his own Reason, as to assent to any thing, before he is thorowly convinc'd: But if they understood the Doctrine, and were convinc'd of the Truth of it, and, for some selfish Reason would not yet assent unto it, they something temper by that Excuse the rash Contempt and Scorn of the former, that mock'd at it before they consider'd it ; but yet, it being supposed, that they were fully convinc'd, the Course they took was full of Folly, Danger, and Irresolution, as it is withal that (with *Felix*) take a *farther time*, and that, perhaps, will be the Loss of their own Souls. Let

us be aware of this Fault, which we may easily avoid, with considering *First*, that if we be resolved to obey *God's Voice* in his Word, that he requires us to do it immediately, *for to day if you will hear my Voice*; which implies, that if not to *Day*, not at *all*, because the next Words immediately follow, *unto whom I swear in my Wrath, that they should not enter into my Rest*. And therefore it is as good not to resolve at all, as not immediately to put that Resolution into Act; because, that besides the Danger of many intercepting Casualties, which may prevent thy living to another Day, the very Presumption of deferring does much discredit thy Purpose: Therefore, if *Baal be God*, follow him; but if the *Lord be God*, follow him; there must be no halting between two, but an immediate following of the one, or the other. *Secondly*, consider, that there is Danger of being harden'd, by the Deceitfulness of Sin; therefore the longer you are in leaving your Sins, the more Difficulty you will find in parting with them; and every Moment's Neglect, will add unto your former Score, and make your Repentance more troublesome, if not impossible. *Thirdly*, consider, that, perhaps, we may not have the outward Means always, as *Zachariah* 1. 5.

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Where are the Fathers, and do the Prophets live for ever? And the Psalmist, we see not our Tokens, and we have not one Prophet left: Therefore our Mortality, and the Uncertainty of enjoying the Continuance of the Preaching of God's Word, and of the Means of Grace, ought to make us accept of God's gracious Offers to us: How many damn'd Souls, now in Hell, if it were possible, would give a thousand Worlds for but one Hour's Opportunity of Repentance, that they might escape out of those Flames; and yet they cannot have it. Fourthly, consider, that the Impulses, Knockings, and Motions of God's Grace, are not in our own Power, and, for that Reason, we ought not to slip the least Opportunity of God's Grace; and therefore, tho' excellent is that Resolution of the Prophet David, *I have sworn, and will perform it, to keep the Judgment of thy Righteousness*; yet better (in my Opinion) is that other of his, *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments*. He that is a long time doing what he ought to have done at first, lessens the Obligation; and he that will not obey God's first Call, perhaps, shall not be called any more: And thus I have done with both the different Sorts of St. Paul's Auditors, the Scorners and Deserrers.

ferrers ; and this good came of it, that *St. Paul* departed safe from them, while they opposed one another ; he escap'd, as he had like to have done Chap. 23. by raising a Dispute between the *Sadduces* and the *Pharisees*. And thus God oftentimes sets the *Adversaries* by the Ears, for the Peace of the Church : This shews that Christianity does not forbid a *Man* to use any lawful means for avoiding the *Snares* of his *Enemies*, and *Persecutors*, nor require him to run unnecessarily into certain danger, when he may avoid it. And thus I come to the third sort of *Hearers*, such as adhered to *St. Paul*, and Believed ; one in particular, a *Judge*, *Dyonisius the Areopagit*, and a *Woman* of no mean *Quality*, by naming her *Damaris* ; and no doubt tho' the Text says *many others believed*, yet these were named to shew that some great Persons were called, to keep the Truth from the contempt of the World, which is apt (as the *Jews* did) to object, *Does any of the Rulers or Scribes believe in him?* And to shew God's freedom to call whom he pleases ; in which you may observe, *First*, Their Behaviour, they adhere unto *St. Paul*, that is, by *Faith* to his *Doctrine*, and by *Love* to his *Person* ; for Men usually love them that have been *Instruments* of conveying good unto them ; and this the *Epistle* to the *Galatians* makes

makes good, *Chap. 4. v. 15.* where St. Paul says, *If it had been possible, they would have pluckt out their own Eyes, and given them unto him.* And no wonder they should love him, as he says to *Philemon*, v. 19. *they ought unto him their own selves*; for as much as he converted them to the Truth. To omit all further Discourse upon this Subject, not only St. Paul, but all other dispersers of God's Word, are *Heralds* and *Ambassadors*; and therefore are for their Master's sake, if not for their own, to be lov'd and honour'd. This practice of theirs to St. Paul, is to be imitated by us, that we may reap the greater benefit by our Teachers; for where we are prejudiced against the *Person*, we are rarely benefited by his *Doctrine*.

But then, *Secondly*, they believed; which implies not only, that the *Doctrine* is true, but also that we should place our confidence in *Christ*, as *Chap. 16. 31.* Sir, *what shall we do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*; it is not to praise the Sermon, or to commend the Preacher, for his well linct words, and his elegant phrases, that is our business, but to believe the *Word*, to trust in *Christ*, and to Receive him upon the *Terms of the Gospel*; that is, not only as our *Prophet* to teach us, or our *Priest* to reconcile us, but as our
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Prince to govern us; and thus have we seen the Issue and Success of *St. Paul's* Disputing with the *Philosophers* at *Athens*, which the *Holy Ghost* would have committed to Writing that it might be of continual use to the *Church*.

You have heard of the three sorts of *Hearers*, the *Mockers* who made a *Scorn* at his *Doctrine*, the *Differers* who would hear him another time, and those that *Cave* to him, and believed. I shall not trouble you with any farther Repetition of what I spoke of thus Severally, I hope the Memory makes that needless. But I shall now consider which of these three Sorts of *Hearers* we our Selves have been, If of the first, and second, our Case is Deplorable, and better it had been for us, to have been absent: For as great Prescriptions in Physick, if they help not, do hurt, so the often hearing God's Word, and receiving no Advantage by it, makes us much worse: If we have been of the third sort of *Hearers*, it remains we cleave to the *Truth*, and Love our *Teachers* with Constancy. And therefore let me intreat you to Examine your Selves, which of these you have been: And if you find you have at any time made a *Mock* at God's Word, which every Man Implicitly does, that does not square his Life by

it. Let me intreat you to repent of this betimes; for who knows but that the Lord may yet shew you *Mercy* in forgiving you; and therefore repent of your former Error, by receiving it now with Humility, Thankfulness, and Reverence. Secondly, If you have been of the second sort of *Hearers*, that is a *Deferrer*, and didst resolve to hear it with more attention another time, repent of that also; and now while it is to *day*, least you may be never allow'd another moment, lay hold upon the means of *Salvation*, amend your *Lives*, and break off all your sins with righteousness; and, as the Prophet *Jeremy* exhorts you, give glory to God by an holy life, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; least whilst you look for light, he shall turn into the shadow of Death, and make it gross darkness. And to this End, consider that *St. Paul*, when some mocked, others said, we will hear thee another time, departed from them. So if we defer this moment, for ought we know, we shall never have another offer of Grace made to us: For tho' *Christ* stands and knocks, yet if he is not allowed entrance, he will go his way, and, for any thing that we know, never knock again, and then miserable will be our condition. Thirdly, and Lastly, If you be
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of the third sort of Hearers, that is, such as cleave to the *word of Truth*, persevere in so doing, and shew your sincerity therein, by the Integrity and Holiness of your Lives; and it concerns you at this time more especially to do so, because there is such a wavering and neutrality in *Religion*, some flitting from one to another; and others, because of the difference of Men's Professions, owning no *Religion* at all: But, blessed be God, you have no cause to change from yours, which allows you the use of the *Oracles* of God for your *Directions*, and the *Sacraments* for the Badges of your *Christianity*, and the Publick *Liturgies* of the *Church*, to assist and direct you in your *Prayers* and *Devotions* to God, the only proper *Object* of them: And therefore you need not question whether *God* be *God*, or *Baal* be *God*. Therefore if you will but adhere to the Doctrine of the *Church*, of which you are Members, there is no danger of your halting between two; and we cannot, without rendring our hearty Thanks to *God*, and to our *Governors*, remember, that we have lately good Encouragement by the Acts of Parliament, newly reviv'd by Proclamation, to repress the Insolencies of our Adversaries, of the *Church* of *Rome* on the one hand, and of the *Kirk* on the other, which we hope will be suddenly

denly executed against them, God's Name be praised for it; and give me leave to say unto you what *Azariah* said unto *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. *the Lord is with you, while you are with him*: And let me further add that Advertisement which he there adds, touching *Israel*, *this Kingdom has been a long time without the true God, without a teaching Priest, and without Law*: I mean not only the Law of the Land, and the Liberty of the Subject, taken away by the Usurpers, but the Divine Law conveyed to the People in the proper Channels of a rightly ordained *Priesthood*. Therefore since it has pleased God to restore these to us again; let us shew our gratitude, by squaring our Lives and Actions by them; let it not only procure a thorow Reformation and Amendment in our selves, by forsaking our own particular Sins, but let us endeavour to the utmost that we are able, to procure it in others; not only by good Advice and Examples, but by all the methods which we may lawfully make use of. If we neglect to do this, the Parable of the unclean *Spirit* cast out, *Matt.* 12. exactly describes our Case; that is, if there be only a sweeping and a garnishing, without a *new* Inhabitant to keep possession, the *unclean Spirit which was cast out, will return with seven worse Spirits, and*
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the end of this our Reformation will be worse than the beginning. Be strong therefore, let not your hands be weak ; as he there adds, the works shall be rewarded. Therefore, to conclude all in one word, Let us from this very instant be constant , and with full purpose of Heart cleave unto the Lord with all our Souls ; which if we do , we shall have God's Grace and Blessing upon us, and the Quiets and Comforts of a good Conscience in this Life, and an entrance afforded us to that Eternal Glory whereunto our Lord Jesus Christ is gone before, to take possession of in our Names, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Honour, &c. Amen.

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DISCOURSE XII.

*Of the Happy State of
them that Dye in the
Lord.*

Rev. 14. 13.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me write, Blessed are the Dead that Dye in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and that their works do follow them.

GOD would have nothing stable in the Universe but himself, in whom there is no variableness. nor shadow of turning by Change ; all other things are turning shadows in the great Exchange of this sublu-
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nary World ; therefore the *Spouse* in the *Canticles* waits, until the day Dawns, and the Shadow flyeth away. It is a madness to be deplored, to think we can metamorphose this *Valley of tears*, into a Paradise of perpetual delight ; or clip he Wings of good Fortune so, that she can never fly away from us ; or ground a sure Foundation upon a tottering Quagmire. I need not travel further for a proof of this, than to our own dayly Experience, which must needs convince us, that if there were not some more permanent happiness design'd for Man, than this Life can afford ; and some more powerful considerations to buoy up his spirits, drooping under the pressures of this crazy constitution, than what can be Extracted from the Quintessence of all Earthly pleasure ; that what *St. Paul* says hypothecally, might be positively asserted of him, *That he is of all creatures most miserable.* But God that has design'd more Noble things for Man, has on purpose incorporated a wearisomness in the very Constitutions of all Earthly pleasures, that he might be thereby induced to endeavour the attainment of a more full Contentment in the enjoyment of *God* himself ; and in order thereunto, does not only daily, and hourly, mind us of our Duties, by subtracting from our pleasures : But intimates unto us, That if these pleasures do

not

not leave us, we shall soon leave them; and that not only by the Aches, and Pains, and Infirmities of our own Constitutions; but also by presenting us with Objects of Mortality, as he is now in his Wisdom pleas'd to do: And that we might not be discourag'd with the Difficulties, and cross Accidents of this Life, he assures us of a future blessedness, which nothing but our own wretched Carelessness, and desperate Contempt, can disappoint us of. For so says the Text, *I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.* To the discoursing of which words, I shall only premise, that after St. John had, in the preceding Chapters, represented the doubtful and dangerous Combat, between the Dragon, the Devil, and the Woman, the Church, clad with the Sun, the Sun of righteousness Christ Jesus, treading the Moon under her feet, that is, all sublunary things unstable as the Moon, having her Head adorned with Twelve Stars, that is the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles. He proceeds in this Chapter to publish the Wages of this Christian Warfare, by two heavenly Trumpeters, and Heralds, the one proclaiming the Kingdom of Christ; the other the fall of Antichrist; the one denouncing Eternal shame

to them that forsake the Standard of their profession ; the other Singing the Everlasting *Requiem* of those blessed Saints that lay down their Lives in the profession of the Christian Faith : For so it follows in the Text, *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, &c.* In which I observe, *First*, the Author God, *implied in the voice from heaven* ; *Secondly*, the Amanuensis or Penman, *St. John, saying to me Write* ; *Thirdly*, the Oracle, *Blessed are they that die in the Lord* ; *Fourthly*, The certainty of this, *yea, saith the Spirit* ; *Fifthly* the Reasons, *First privative, That they may rest from their Labours. Secondly positive, Their works follow them.*

First of the Author, A Voice from Heaven, no less than an Heavenly Authority could serve to confirm this seeming Paradox, that a Death so vile in the opinion of Nature, should be so blessed in the Judgment of Faith ; and that they who have been accounted as *Off-scourings* in this World, should be esteemed precious Jewels in the other : But they that behold these things only with the Dim Eye of Nature, will hardly be perswaded, that these miserable Creatures rejected by them, as *Excrements*——should yet arrive at so Blessed a period. *We fools*, says Solomon, *Wisdom the 5th. and 4th. accounted his life*

life madness, and his end to be without honour: And therefore to leave us place for doubting he cites his Authour, *I heard a Voice from Heaven*. Secondly, observe that when Heaven speaks, Man ought to be Silent, for that which exceeds our Capacities, does not transcend God's omnipotence. We believe the *Astrologers* when they tell us the Sun is one Hundred and Forty times bigger than the whole Globe of the Earth, so says *Tycho Brahe*, and he speaks with the lowest; yet we know what *Soloman* says, *the Height of Heaven, the Depth of the Earth, and the Heart of a King are unsearchable*. And how much more ought we to trust God who can neither *Deceive, nor be Deceived*, in those things which we cannot Fathom with the Plummets of our shallow reason, especially since he has given us such Pledges and pawns of his Truth, and Power, that an usurer would trust a Bankrupt upon far less security, for as when I see a little seed of a Plant, or Tree cast into the Ground; I do not immediately ask where is the Greeness of the Leaves, the Beauty of the Blossoms, and the Sweetness of the Fruit, but expect all these in their due time: So when I see the dead Body of a Saint cast into the Earth, I esteem it as the seed of Immortality. Again to be united to the Soul now departed in Light, and Glory. Experience reaches me to believe

the former, and the Authority of my Celestial Father commands my assent to the latter and if it were the proper Scope of my Text I should account it no difficult task to Demonstrate perspicuously that the Holy Scriptures are no other, than the *Voice of God from Heaven*. As *First* from their *Antiquity*, being more Ancient, than the very Gods of the *Heathens*; as *St. Austin* proves in his Book *de Civitate Dei*. *Secondly*, from their perfect *Harmony*, from which other Authors are so far, that nothing is more usual amongst them, than to contradict one another. As if they were of the Blood of the *Ottomans* who think themselves never safe, untill they have Cut their Brothers Throat; but here behold a sweet consent, of so many Living in sundry Ages, treating upon several subjects, upon different occasions, like the Candles in the *Levitical Temple*, looking every one towards another, and all towards the stem, maintaining both a perfect Harmony among themselves, and a joint adherence to *Christ Jesus*, as if they were not several inditers but several Pens of the *Holy Ghost*. *Thirdly*, from their *Efficacy*, for whereas the great *Philosophers* with so much study, Learning and Eloquence, could scarce gather a few Disciples out of the adjoining Villages; they a poor handful of Shepherds and Fishers do but pipe upon

upon their Oaten Reeds, and the whole World runs after them, the opinion of *Pythagoras*, *Zeno*, and *Epicurus* vanish on a sudden, and the *Heathenish Deities* forsake their *Temples*. Yet these do not persuade the World to a sensual Religion, as the *Mahumetan*: If so, it had been no wonder to Swim down the Stream; but to such a Religion as does surmount the understanding, teaches them to deny their Wills, and Affections, crosses their Secular Interests, and Designs, and makes them ready to seal the truth thereof with their very Blood. *Fourthly*, From the Sanctity of their Matter, and Majesty of their Stile, you shall not find in them the fatal destiny of the *Stoicks*, nor the brutish Sensuality of the *Epicureans*, nor the *Pythagorical* Transmigration of Souls, nor the *Platonical* Community of Women, nor the *Persian* Incest, no Adultrous *Jupiter*, no Spightful *Juno*, no Bloody *Mars*, no Theevish *Mercury*, no Bastardly *Esculapius*, no Drunken *Bacchus*, no Prostitute *Venus*, to be worship'd as Gods. Here you find a powerful plainness without *Affectation*, and such a mixture of Majesty and Simplicity, as shall squeeze Tears from the Eyes of the Reader, when the Elegant Phrases, Musical Cadencies, Elaborate Periods, and Pathetical persuasions of the rarest *Orator*, shall hardly touch his Affections: Yet here

is such *Metre* in the *Psalms*, such *Morality* in the *Proverbs*, such *Philosophy* and *Astrology* in *Job*, *Judicial Policy* in *Moses*, and *Elegancy* surpassing *Tully* and *Demosthenes*, in *Isaiah* and *St. Paul*, especially in the first Chapter of the *one*, and in the Seven last Verses in the Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* in the other; that shews the *Holy Ghost* could have used *Adjuments* and *Ornaments*, if it had pleased him; but if we consider the matter, that is sublime above the pitch of humane apprehension, particularly about the *Fall of Man*, his *Redemption* by *Jesus Christ*, the *Love* we owe to *God* here, and the *Happiness* we shall enjoy hereafter. Natural Reason never dreamt of these things; but the time will not allow me to press these things at large. *Fifthly*, Add to this the Light of prophetual *Prediction*, the *Universal Deluge*, the *Captivity of Babylon*, the *Four Monarchies*; the *Incarnation*, *Birth* and *Passion* of our *Saviour*. *Josiah* is named long before he is born; *1 Kings* 13. 2. And so is *Cyrus*; *Isai.* 44. 28. This was far from the blind and ambiguous Oracles of the *Heathens*, and could not proceed but from the *God of Heaven*. *Sixthly*, By the *Testimony* of the *Blessed Martyrs*, so many that (as *St. Hierom* has it in his Epistle to *Cromatins*) there was not that Day in the Year, whereon five Thousand

land did not seal the Truth thereof, which their Blood (except the Calends of *January*) as which times the *Pagans* were so intent upon their *Heathenish Banquets* and *Solemnities*, that they had not Leisure to slaughter the poor *Christians*: And lastly, From those many *Miracles*, whereby these sacred Writings have been confirmed, the *Simplicity*, and *Modesty* of the Pen-men, not instructed in the Schools, not trained up in the Arts, not hunting after vain Glory, not sparing to Deluge their own, and their Ancestors Faults, and Infirmities. Nay, further, from those Judgments of *God* that fell upon these *Tyrants*, and *Hereticks*, that attempted to prophane, or suppress those sacred *Oracles*; and from the Ministerial Authority of the *Church*, and the Consent of so many succeeding Ages: But above all these, from that heavenly Light that shines in the *Scriptures*, to all them, that with Humility read, and with Devotion pray, that they may understand them; which alone by *God's Grace*, does beget an infallible Certainty, rather of Experience, than of Speculation. *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, which you do well to take heed to, a Light that shines in Darknes, says St. Peter.* Thus as the Prince of *Darknes* was cast down from *Heaven*, so likewise our Illumination does descend from *Heaven*, from *God* the
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Father, who is the Father of *Light*, from God the *Son*, who is the *Light of the World*; and from God the *Holy Ghost*, who is the *Light of our Hearts*, and this is the last Resolution of our *Faith*: *I heard a Voice from Heaven*; but as that sacred Fire which came down from *Heaven*, was kept alive till the Captivity of *Babylon*; so God would have this heavenly Oracle committed to Writing, that it might be conveyed to Posterity; the Word spoke is more efficacious, but written is more durable; therefore saith the Spirit, write it in a Book.

Whence we may first infer, that We are not in these days, with the vertiginous *Enthusiasts*, to expect new *Revelations*, a cloven *Tongue*, or a *Voice from Heaven*; these were those *Missilia*, or *Medals*, which the King of *Glory* did disperse at the Day of his Coronation; but now we must have Recourse for our Direction, and Practice to the *Law*, and to the *Prophets*, for he hath shewed thee, O Man.

And now that we have found the Author, It is time to take a View of this heavenly Oracle: *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord*, from hence forth. I do not question, but St. *John* does principally intend thereby, the Noble Army of *Martyrs*, which suffered for the Faith of *Christ*; yet not excluding true *Confessors*, who want not a Will and Resolution to die for *Christ*, if they were called to it;

both

both answers the Design of the *Holy Ghost*, which is to encourage us to persevere in their Holy Faith, in the midst of the Fury and Rage of *Antichrist*. So (*1 Theff. 4. 16.*) *The dead in Christ shall rise first ; 2 Tim 2. 12. and 4. 16. they that live in Christ ; not for, but in Christ ; so not Martyrs only, but Confessors also, have a title to this Blessed in the Text.* But first of *Martyrs*, is it the principal Wisdom of the Serpent, as *Epiphanius* observes, that being assaulted, she exposes her Body to save her Head, which she thrusts into some Cleft of a Rock, or rould into the Circle of her Body ; so it is the Wisdom of a Christian to sacrifice his Estate, his Fortune, his Hopes, his Life it self, for his Head *Christ Jesus ; Kings* reward their Followers with Chains of Gold ; but this is insignificant, in Comparison of what the Followers of *Christ* are rewarded with. And it is the Opinion of Divines, that those very Members that have suffered any Disgrace for *Christ*, shall have a most excellent and exceeding Measure of Glory. The Protomartyr, *St. Stephen*, the Standard-bearer of that Glorious Army, shall glister with as many Gems, as his Body received Wounds and Bruises by the Stones : And the Neck of *St. Paul* shall shine with a Chain a Thousand times more Glorious than the Gold of *Ophir* ; and the Skin of
St. Bar.

St. Bartholomew shall out-shine the Splendor of the Sun. And therefore, tho' the Schools assigned accidental Rewards to *Virgins*, *Doctors*, and *Martyrs*; which they called *Aureole*, to *Virgins*, for their peculiar Conquest over the *Flesh*; to *Doctors* for their Conquest of the *Devil*, and to *Martyrs* for the Conquest of the *World*. *Doctors* in the *intelligible* part of the Soul. *Virgins* in the *concupiscible*, and *Martyrs* in the *irascible*; yet the chiefest Honour was given to *Martyrs*, as having wrestled with the most formidable Enemy: But tho' *Christian Confessors* come short of this *Aureole*, they do not want their Share in the *Aurea* of Essential Blessedness; for that they *die in the Lord*; and therefore it was that *Balaam* pray'd, *O let me die the Death of the righteous; let my latter end be like unto his*. St. *Ambrose* makes a threefold Death, the *First* absolutely *Evil*, that is a Death in Sin. The *Second* simply *Good*, that is a Death to Sin. The *Third* *indifferent*, that is a Separation of Soul and Body. To the *Wicked*, it is the end of all Joy, the beginning of all Sorrow, the Gates of *Hell*, and the locking up the Door of Comfort, with the Key of Eternity for ever, and ever. But to the *Righteous*, it is, as in my Text, a Step to Blessedness, a Close to our Mortality; and as *Seneca* has it, *transitus a Labore ad refrigerium*, a Passage from

from Labour to Rest, from Expectation to Reward, from a Combat to a Crown, from Death to Life, from Faith to Knowledge, from a Pilgrimage to a biding Place, and from a World to a Father, This is the Blessedness which the Scriptures describe by a Marriage Feast, a Throne of Majesty, a Paradise, and a Place of Pleasure. St. John represents the Pavements, and the Gates, and the Walls of the New Jerusalem, by Gold and precious Stones; but as for the Habitations themselves, the whole World does not afford a Resemblance, and therefore what inestimable Treasure think you? What an eternal Weight of Glory has he provided for his Sons in the next World, which is his own Pallace Royal, and the Place where his Honour dwelleth? But I shall meet with this Subject again; God grant we may all meet with it, not only intellectually, but experimentally, when we stand most in need of it. I find four principal Fools in Scripture: Adam that sold Paradise for an Apple: Lot's Wife, that sold her Life for a Sight of Sodom: Esau that sold his Birthright for a Mels of Pottage; and Judas that sold his Master for thirtypieces of Silver; but he is a greater Fool than any of these that sells his Part in this Blessedness, for a Mushroom Profit, or momentary Pleasure, clogg'd at the Heels with Repentance; yet this flattering

tering Devil, this inticing *Dalilah*, the World, *compfa sed fallax, venusta sed infidiola*, does so allure us with her enchanting Baits, that like another *Medea*, she transforms us into brute Beasts, that mind only what is present, without the least Regard to our future Happiness. *Odo Casariensis* has a pretty Illusion (to decipher this unto us) of a Man flying from an *Unicorn*, and falling into a Pit, the Bottom whereof was full of Serpents ; but on the other side of the Pit grew a little Tree, by catching of which, he for a while saved himself ; but at the rest of the Tree there was a *Black and White Mouse*, which by little and little gnawed as under the Root of the Tree ; the Man hanging by them till he was hungry , and finding the Fruit very delicious, forgot his Danger, till the Root was eat clean thro', and so fell into the Bottom of the Pit, and was devoured by the Serpents. Now this *Unicorn* is *Death* ; the *Man* every Son of *Adam* : The *Tree* wherein we catch hold to save our selves from Destruction, is this frail *Life* ; the *Black and White Mouse* is *Day and Night* ; and while we forget our present Danger, and only please our selves with the transitory Pleasures of this *Life*, our *Glass* is run out, our *Thread* is spun, and time consumes our *Life*, and we fall into the Pit of destruction : Thrice blessed are they

they that implore the Assistance of God, and catch hold of the helping Hand of Christ. So as to escape the Horror of this Unicorn, by the Buckler of a Christian Faith: And the only way to do this, and to arrive at this Blessedness, is to live a godly Life; for live well, least you Die ill, was St. Bernard's Advice; and you know, that as the Tree falls, so it lies, and it commonly falls as it leans. It was Nero's Epitaph, *Dedecorose vixi, turpius perivi*, he lived ingloriously, and died more filthily; and of a Roman Bishop, *Intravit Vulpes, regnavit ut leo, & mortuus est ut canis*, he entred into the Papacy, like a Fox, he ruled like a Lion, and died like a Dogg; a beastly Life usually ends in a brutish Death; for God will not be one God, in our Sickness, if we be not his Servants in our Health. It is the Devils Policy in Evil things, to separate the End from the Means, and in good things, to separate the Means from the End; that is to perswade a Man, that he may live the Child of Belial, and die the Son of God: But God has knit together the Means and End, so inseparably, that only they who are Saints upon Earth, shall be Saints in Heaven; and as this Life leaves us, the next shall find us. They who live in Christ shall die in Christ; and they that die in Christ shall be blessed, for blessed are they that die in the Lord; and there-

therefore if we be ambitious of a Share in this *Blessedness*, it highly concerns us to look after it betimes, *before we find the white Almond Tree begin to flourish, and the Clouds return after the Rain, our Eyes grow dim, our Ears grow deaf, our Heads begin to shake, our Hands to tremble, our Feet begin to seek for Support, and the Walls of our Body begin to moulder into Dust and Rottenness.*

And since we cannot tell but that we may be sooner call'd upon, we should all of us, whilst it is Day, apply our selves to the securing of this *Blessedness*, and have Recourse to one Author for Assistance, that is to the young Men for Action, middle aged Men for Advice, and old Men for Prayers ; and the rather because, *that when this earthly Tabernacle shall be dissolved, we expect a Building not made with Hands, but eternally in the Heavens ; and thus Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; but where is this Blessedness, if the Soul be not immortal? Which Was so firmly believed by the very Heathens, that the Romans, at the Burial of their good Emperors, used to tie an Eagle to the Pile, with burning the String, the Eagle soared towards Heaven, to shew that the Soul is not extinguish't with the Dissolution of the Body ; and the Scriptures are so clear in this Point, that it supercedes all Endeavours*

vours of Evincing it, *for thou fool*, says the Evangelist, *this night will they fetch away thy soul from thee*; and to the Thief upon the Cross, *This night shalt thou be with me in Paradise*; and the Soul of Lazarus was born by *Angels* into Abraham's bosome. Elias prayed for his Hostesses Son, that his Soul might return to him: *And when the Body is dissolv'd to dust*, the Spirit (says Solomon) *shall return to God that gave it*. Otherwise Man, that most Noble Creature, should be ordained for the meanest end; (that is) be subject to more Cares, and Fears, and yet be no happier than the Beast that perish, and the best Men would be most miserable; and that natural impression of a Deity, and Religion consequent thereunto, which is upon every Man's Heart, would be so far from being an happiness, that it would be his greatest misfortune if the Soul were not immortal. Seeing then, that the Soul must be subject either of everlasting Bliss, or everlasting Misery; How careful should this make us of doing any thing that might endanger its Happiness? *For what should it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul*. Secondly, This then should teach us, not to Sorrow for the Dead, as they that have no hope; *Weep for the Dead, for he has lost the Light*, says Bensyrach — and a-
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gain, *Make little weeping for the Dead, for he is at Rest.* It is an Argument of our Love; for when our Saviour *wept* for *Lazarus*, the *Jews* concluded, *Look how he loved him.* But then on the other hand, we must not counterfeit a Sorrow, nor revive *heathenish* Customs, by hiring Mercenary, Conductitious Women, to fill the Skies with their Histrionical Howlings; surely our deceased Friends deserved better at our hands, than such feigned Tears and Clamours. Is our Love no warmer? Have we no fitter Subject for our Dissimulation? Or do we take their Condition to be so deplorable, that we thus bewail them? The Reliques of *Paganism*, are very unbecoming *Christians*. But yet on the other hand, we must take heed, that we run not into a contrary Extream with some Fanatical Innovators, and instead of a Christian Burial, bring in a Dumb shew, having not so much as the least expression of a Christian Faith, or Hope: For tho' it be true, that it was no prejudice to the Blessed *Martyrs*, that their Bodies were Burnt to *Ashes*, or Drowned in the *Sea*, or Devoured by Ravenous *Beasts*; for in this Case, that of the *Poet* holds true, *Celo tegitur qui non habet Urnam*: Yet in an ordinary way, there is a respect due to the very Bodies of the Saints departed,

as the Temples of the Holy Ghost, the Organs that he used to all Good, washed in the Laver of Regeneration, whose Members the Weapons of Righteousness, which did partake of the Body and Blood of *Christ*: By which *they glorified God in their Bodies*, and which being raised again in due time, shall be made conformable to the Glorious Body of *Christ*; thence are those Offices we owe unto them, to wait upon their Herse, as *David* did upon *Abner*, and the Citizens upon the Widows Son, to Inter them decently in the Earth our Common Mother. And some respect is also to be had to a Consecrated Place; *Joseph* desired his Bones should be Buried in the Land of Promise, where the Temple was to be Erected; and if their quality require it, to adorn their Sepulchers, *Matt. 23.* and to Commend them in a Funeral Sermon, or Oration, to excite others to their Imitation, *2 Sam. 9. 19.* and howsoever the Recital of such Godly Lessons, Prayers, and Exhortations, as may serve to moderate our Grief for their Loss, confirm our hopes of a Resurrection, admonish us of our own Mortality and prepare us for our End, may be blamed by some, yet without Reason; because, that by them, we provide for their Honour, and satisfy our own Minds. Is it reason-

able that I should have respect to a Ring, or a Remembrance that my deceased Friend left me, and yet pay none to himself? This has been the practice of the Church of *Christ* in all Ages, as you may read in *Dionysius the Areopagit*, (or whoever else, it was, certainly a most Ancient Author) in the Seaventh Chapter of his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, where he Recites their several Uses, their bringing their Dead to the Church, their Coffening of him, their Salutations, their Hymns, their Prayers, and their Commemorations. He that will oppose his own giddy Fancy against Reason, Authority, and the Practice of the Church in all Ages, I shall make him no other Answer, than that, *He that is thus Wise in his own Eyes, there is more hopes of a Fool than of such a Man.*

And so I have done with the Oracle, Excepting one word, *from henceforth*, that is, says *St. Austin*, and after him venerable *Bede*, from the time of their death. And therefore that Antient Error is now generally exploded, and confuted by this one word, *from henceforth*, That the Souls of the Righteous do not immediately after their Death enjoy the Beatifick Vision, but sleep in I know not what secret Receptacles, till the Day of Judgment. *Christ* promised the Thief upon the Cross, *This day shalt thou*

thou be with me in Paradise. And I desire, says St. Paul, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ ; And we all know that when this Earthly Tabernacle shall be dissolved; we have a Building with God, not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens. And again, While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. St. Stephen prayed, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. And Revelations the Seventh, These are they that have washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb: Therefore they are before the Throne of God, and serve him Night and Day in his Temple. And Hebrews the Twelfth, Ye are come into Mount Sion, the City of the Living God, to an innumerable Company of Angels, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect. Here is a present enjoyment of Blessedness, even from henceforth; which word alone is sufficient to overthrow Purgatory, which the Papists defend so stiffly, that they will rather quit their part of Heaven, than lose their share of *that*; and good reason for it, since it is the Fire that warms the Kitchen: whose Heat and Pains (they say) is nothing inferior to the Torments of Hell, but in Duration; and is a certain introduction to Blessedness. If the time would permit, I could derive its Pedigree from Plato, who first hatcht it in his *Gorgias* or *Phædo*, unto the Council of Florence,

about Fourteen Hundred years after the Death of *Christ*, during which time, it suffer'd many alterations, according to the Humours of the several Merchants it met with, discredited by the *Scriptures*, where some of their own side confess it has no ground; thrust out of Doors by the *Greek Church*, and so much discredited by them; that the Council of *Basil* publish'd an *Apolo*gy directly disallowing the *Roman Do*-ctrine of *Purgatory*; and how little yet they regard it, may appear by the *Popes* pressing them to receive it, is so notorious, that it needs no proof. And tho' it was entertain'd by some Foreigners upon tryal of its good Behaviour; yet it was never made a free *Denison* by the *Latins*, till they found how profitable this *Heathenish Brat* was like to prove: For neither the ancient Form of Prayer for the Dead, which were rather Commemorations, or Thanksgivings, or a Convoy to accompany the *Saints* into *Heaven*, or had reference to their secret receptacle, (which some of the *Fathers* favour'd, but is Diametrically oppos'd to *Purgatory*) or to their publick acquittal at the Day of Judgment, or to the Consummation of their Happiness at the Resurrection, or to the time of their Transmigration out of this Life, which it seems we do not altogether

gether 'abhor from, at our Anniversary of *Christmas*, *Easter*, and the like, as if *Christ* was to be Born that day, to Suffer and to Rise again, will warrant their *Purgatory*; no, nor the *Purgatory Fire* in sundry *Fathers*, by which they only meant the Fire of Conflagration, which shall consume the World, through which they held both good and bad must pass, could Even the Ballance with this one Word, *henceforth*. But I hasten to the next thing in the Text, to wit, the Argument, in these words, *Yea, saith the Spirit*; which proves the certainty of this *Blessedness*. And how can that but be true and certain, whose Author is *God*, that cannot lie? And tho' the *Church* indeed is the *Register* that keeps the *Scripture*, the *Touchstone* that distinguishes the *Genuine* from the *Supposititious*, the *Cryer* to proclaim it, and the *Interpreter* to Expound it; yet its Authority is from the *Spirit*, and not from the *Church*: For, *yea, saith the Spirit*: But I leave the *Testimony*, to come to the *Reasons* of this *Blessedness*. First, *Privative*, *They rest from their labours*; *Few and evil* (saith *Jacob*) *have been the days of my pilgrimage*; not because the Days are Evil, says *St. Ambrose*, but because Evils are encreased by the accession of Days; *Great trouble is*

created for every Man, and a heavy yoke upon all the Sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their Mothers womb, to the day that they return to the mother of all things, Eccles. 40. 1. Before the Fall Roses grew without Thorns; but now much Labour without Comfort; and no Pleasure without much Trouble. For besides what are given to us, by those Relations, we have to one another as Men, Troubles arise from the Heavenly Lamps, from the Elements, from inanimate Creatures, from brute Beasts, but above all, from Man himself; we suffer in our Bodies, Minds, Good name, and Estates; and to all these, add the Temptations of the Devil, who according to St. Anthony's Vision, lays snares for us, in all Places. Gold is a Snare, Silver is a Lime-twig, Lands are a Net, and Love a Trap; So that the longer we Live, the greater our Account is; and it is far more grievous to Live to Sin, than to Die in Sin; for tho' the payment be Deferr'd, it lights more heavily in the End.

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And therefore, how should it be the chiefest Care of every one of us, to live so religiously here, that when we come to die, we may with Confidence cry out with St. Cyprian, *Amplectamur*, and so on? Let us Embrace that Day, which shall translate us to Eternal Habitations; and being freed from the Snares, and Troubles, and Labours of this Life, shall remove us to Paradiſe, a Place of Pleasure and Everlaſting Reſt.

And thus I come, from the first Argument, to prove *the Blessedness of those that die in the Lord*, which was privative; *they rest from their Labours*: To the second Argument, which is positive, *and their works do follow them*. Works here is by a *Metonymie*, put for a *Reward* of the Works, as that which a Man sows he shall reap. But observe, the Text says their *Works*, and not anothers; whence may inſer, that it is a covetous Artifice of the Church, or rather Court of Rome, to cheat the Vulgar, by teaching them, that a Man may supply the Defects of his own Works, by taking out of the Treasure of the Surplusage of another Man's Works, for Satisfaction: Whereas God knows the wisest *Virgins* have Oyl little enough in their Lamps for themselves; and therefore most ridiculous is that Assertion of *Lessius* and *Eſcobar*; that

that he that cannot fast himself, may fast by another, or give Money for a Fast. Secondly, The Text says, *their works follow them, but do not go before them*; whence observe, that we are rewarded according to our Works, but not for our Works. It is a strange and false Slander of our Adversaries, that say, that we deny the Necessity of good Works; the Truth is, it were to be wisht, that the *blind Zeal* of some, who think they can never go far enough from the *Papists*, until they become *Solifidians*, did not give too just Cause for this Imputation, which cannot be charged upon any Son of the true Church of *England*; for they are so far for good Works that they will neither suffer them to be pluckt up by the Roots as unprofitable Weeds; nor yet allow them to thrust *Christ* out of the Chair; for they maintain, that tho' they are not justified by Works; yet they must do them, before they can expect, and receive, the *Blessedness* in the Text. For the *Pylot* is not commended till he has brought up his Ship into the Harbor, and the *Olympian Combatant* is not crown'd, till he has finish'd his Course when *Cresus*, after he had shewed *Solon* his Treasures; asking who was the happiest Man he had known? Was answer'd One *Tellus*; *Cresus* admiring he did not

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think him, he reply'd, *dicique Beatus*. No Man can be called Happy, before his Death, which *Cresus* soon after found the Truth of; for being *Cyrus* his Captive, and set upon a Pile of Wood, ready to be burnt, he cry'd out, O *Solon, Solon*, whereupon *Cyrus* demanding what God or Man he invokt? He told this Story, which put *Cyrus* in mind of the Volubility of the World, and was the cause of his saving *Cresus's* Life, and of admitting him for ever after into an intimate Friendship; so that is the End that Crowns the Work, and the Evening commends the Day; and therefore it was, that the Skirts of *Aarons* Garment were encompass'd with *Bells* and *Pomgranats*; and that the Church never us'd to commemorate, or make Panegyricks of the *Saints*, till they had put off *Mortality*; and having sail'd securely thro' the Sea of this troublesome World, were arriv'd at the Haven of perpetual Peace, and Tranquility: whence *Adam* ceases to bewail his Wounds, where there is no Evening, nor Winds, nor Heat, nor Thunder, nor Winter, nor Storms; but an everlasting Spring of immarcescible Pleasures.

And now instead of making any further Application of what has been delivered, I shall endeavour to comply with your Expectation, in speaking something of this
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venerable Person, Whose obsequies we now celebrate, tho' possibly not so much as many of you *know* of him, or I am sure desires ; or I wou'd willingly do in Testimony of the just Sense I shall ever have of his Kindness. And therefore tho' God has no need of such Commendatory Letters from us, as the *Heathens* used to inter with their deceased Friends ; yet being it has been the Practice of the *Church*, to make solemn Commemorations of her deceased *Saints*, to matriculate them in *Heaven*, here on *Earth*, and to send their Praises, as a Convoy to accompany them into the other *World*. It would be the highest Act of Injustice to deny it, to this truly great Man ; it is a part of his due Reward (for *the Memory of the just shall be blessed; the name of the wicked shall rot*) and may encourage others to make his vertuous Example, like the bright part of the Cloud that guided the *Israelites* into the Land of Promise ; and therefore being we are now met to this Purpose : I shall only promise to what I am to speak, that as one said the *Physitians* were happy Men, because the *Sun* reveal'd all their Cures, and the *Earth* buried all their Infirmities ; so Charity prescribes, that we should say nothing of the Dead, but what is good and vertuous ; because it is that only we are bound to imitate :

imitate : And indeed, if you will not be govern'd by Prejudice or Hear-say, which is seldom true ; but speak of certain Knowledge, and Impartiality. It will be needless for me to bespeak a favourable or charitable Opinion of him ; for I must affirm, that in all that intimate Acquaintance, and frequent Conversation I had with him, for many Years, I never observed any thing in him, but what was nicely Just, and truly Pious ; and what others embrac'd upon his Respects, he always chose upon a true Principle of Vertue. This Kingdom (tho' not his Birth) gave him his Initiation into Letters ; and as God gave him Parents careful of his Education, so he was not wanting in answering their Care, by a plentiful Return of the Fruits of his Studies ; and having spent some Years in the *College of Dublin*, with that Respect from all, which usually attends great Parts, accompanied with great Industry, a sweet Disposition, and an obliging Deportment ; and good Reason for it, seeing (as I am informed) that during his Abode in the University : He sought no great Matters for himself, nor fretted any ambitious Person, by standing in Competition with him for any thing, besides Goodness and Knowledge,
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and a very pleasing, and agreeable Conversation. But well knowing that his going thither, was in order to greater Services, he made it his chiefest Business to fit himself for doing good in the *Church*, where he made not halt to rise and climb (as Youths are now a-days apt to do to the highest Perferments, before they are well fledg'd) but proceeded leisurely, and by orderly Steps, not to what he could get, but to what he was fit to undertake; waiting for God's Time of his Advancement, with all Industry, as if he rather desir'd to deserve Preferment, than to be prefer'd. And therefore soon after he was Master in Arts, he was placed in a Living, in the *Diocess of Connor*, where the Greatness of his Parts, tho' in an obscure Corner, soon occasion'd his Removal to this *Parish*, which he held with the *Archdeaconry of Down*, wherein, for many Years, he not only discharg'd the Duty of a faithful and conscientious *Pastor*, but of a pious, prudent and charitable Man; for by his great Prudence and Skill, in managery of Affairs (which is an Imitation of the Divine Providence, that governs the World) he reconciled their Differences, and preserved that Band of Christian Charity, intire among his Parishioners, which for want of a prudent, and able Pastor, is oftentimes

entimes broken. And here he was soon taken Notice of by those two great Patrons of Learning and Ingenuity, Primate *Usher*, and Primate *Bramhall*; both of them having him in so great Esteem for his Acquired, as well as natural Parts; that the later (tho' upon some Mistake prejudic'd against him) made use not only of his Advice, but of his Purse; for recovering much of that Patrimony, which the Iniquity of the Times, and the Covetousness of sacrilegious Persons, and worldly-minded Men, had forc'd from the *Church*: But when Pride and Ambition began to contend with Loyalty, and the Emissaries of the *Kirk* on one Hand, and of *Rome* on the other, would have brought *Monarchy*, and the *Hierarchy* of the *Church* into *Anarchy* and Confusion; then this Great Man not byas'd by Interest, not complying with the Necessity of the Times, and of a numerous Family, but guided by the Principles of a rightly inform'd Conscience, did oppose the Torrent; and in a Treatise written by several Eminent Persons, against the growing Mischiefs, he gave such a Specimen of his Great Parts, but greater Judgment and Integrity, that the *Earl of Strafford*, very well able to judge of Men and things (tho' upon some Mistakes prejudic'd against him, but afterwards his great Friend) declared that

that what Mr. *Maxwell* said in a few Pages, was more to purpose than the whole Treatise besides. And Primate *Usher* had so great an Opinion of his Learning, that he pitch'd upon him to Encounter *O Sullivan*, the Great Champion for the Church of Rome, which he performed so well, that he had the Approbation of the most Judicious and Learned Men of the Kingdom. But God who had a greater Work for him to do, denied him the Advantage of a retir'd and quiet Life, by permitting the late horrid Rebellion, jtho' he still preserved him for better times, yet knowing that his Faith would not fail him, he suffered him to run thro' many Tryals; for no sooner was he miraculously deliver'd from the Enemies, both of his Religion and Country, by the Kindness of a Gentlewoman his Neighbour; but he met with the greatest Danger, where he expected the greatest Safety, for making his Escape to the Scots Army, at *Newtown Ares*; they most barbarously forgetting their Relation to him, as their Country Man, not regarding the Reverence due to his Profession; not observing the Laws of Hospitality, which obliged them

to deal kindly with one that fled to them for Refuge, for a pretence to vent their Malice against him, press him to take their *Covenant*, which (notwithstanding he met with the worst of Usages, being after many Affronts and Indignities cast upon him by the Rabble, constrained to take his Lodging with Vermin, where he might hear the noise of the Work-mens Tools making a Gibbet for his Execution) he still kept his Integrity, refused the *Covenant*, chusing rather an Ignominious Death for Truth, than an Inglorious and Spotted Life; and God having still resolved to make a farther Tryal of his Patience, the good Man was forc'd into the fortune of the *Patriarchs*, to leave his Family and Country, and to seek for Bread and Safety in a strange Land. For so the Prophets were us'd to do, wandering up and down in *Sheep-skins and Goat skins*, and this worthy Person despised the Shame, and took up the Cross and followed his Master, and makes his escape into *England*, where the face of things look'd so ill, that he soon returned to *Ireland*, and after some stay in *Dublin*, was chosen to represent the state of the *Clergy of Ireland*, to the Martyr'd King *Charles I.* at *Oxford*; and in that Affair behaved himself with that Prudence and Judgment, with that strength of Reason and force of

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Argument, that (notwithstanding that several great Persons deluded by the plausible Pretensions of the *Papist Agents* stiffly opposed him) he maintained and defended the Rights of the *Irish Church* before the *King* and *Council*, and when his late *Majesty*, of Blessed Memory, ask'd *Primate Usher*, why the *Irish Clergy* did not vindicate his *Majesty* from the Aspersions cast upon him, as the *English* and *Scots Clergy* had done by their publick Declaration; this great Person was thought fit to undertake it, and did it so well, that the *King* highly approved of it; and his *Majesty* well understanding that he was qualified to be more eminently employed, gives the Bishoprick of *Kilmore* and *Ardagh*, (vacant by the Death of that Primitive and Learned Prelate Doctor *William Bedel*) which as it evidenc'd the *King's* good Opinion of him, so it expos'd him to greater Hazards; for when the *Assembly* of Divines at *London*, could not draw him by Promises and Entreaties to their Party; they offer him (but for a seeming Compliance with them) a far greater Maintenance in *England*, than he enjoy'd in *Ireland*; they bring him before the *Council of State*, where their President *Bradshaw*, with all his Menaces, could not prevail with him to quit the Truth which he had so well learnt, nor was it only in things

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of this Nature, where the doing of some-
things, and not the doing of others,
might have disparaged his Royalty; but he
evidenc'd his Integrity and great Zeal for
the *Church*, where he might have had some
Colour for avoiding the Danger it expos'd
him to, by ordaining many in the *Churches*
of *London* and *elsewhere* publickly, to his
great Hazard, when others more selfishly
cautious declin'd it; and at last returning
to his unfortunate Kingdom, *he is still af-*
licted, though never cast down. He never
made any Application to the *Usurpers* for
any Allowance, which they gave to others
of his *Character*, that too meanly sought
it from them, but minded more the Ser-
vice of *God* and the *Church*, than his own
particular Wants. For to my own Know-
ledge, he did by his private Conference
gain many to, and confirm more in the
Doctrine and Discipline of the *Church*, and
ordain'd so many, that if none had been
living of those that were ordain'd before,
they alone would be enough to keep up
the Priesthood. And when the Wheel of
Providence brought about her most Gra-
cious *King's* Happy Restauration, and
things began to settle upon their former
Bottom, he began to take upon him the
Care of that *Diocess*, of which he had on-
ly the Name and Envy, but no Revenue
for eighteen Years before; and here are so

many living Witnesses of his Behaviour there, and that had the Advantage of so good and kind a *Diocesan*, that I need not to mention how kindly and tenderly he treated his *Clergy*. Only this I cannot omit, tho' his great Loss and a numerous Family might have atton'd for his exacting the utmost of his Dues, yet he had such a fatherly Sense of his Clergy's Poverty, that he not only forgave them their Proxies and Exhibits, but bore all the Expence of the Visitation, verifying that of the *Apostles*, *that he sought not theirs, but them*. And I cannot but remark, that when God thought fit to reward him for all his Services, withgiving him that Rest from his Labours, which he now enjoys, He gave him such Premonitions of his Dissolution, that he did with Impatience expect that fatal Day, on which he told he should die. And tho' I cannot give you a particular Account of his Behaviour in his Sickness, which doubtless was all of a piece with the other parts of his Life; yet I cannot omit the longing Desire he had to be dissolv'd, and to be with *Christ*, which he expressed, by telling his Relations with Tears, that he was afraid their Importunities with *God* for his Recovery, retarded his Passage to *Heaven*; where, without all Peradventure, he enjoys *that*

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Crown of Righteousness, which the righteous judge has prepared for all his faithful Servants. Now to sum up all in a few Words, he was a most excellent Person, not only endowed with all Moral Virtues, but with all the *Apostles* Gradation of Graces and fitted by *God* himself for great Services. If we consider him as a *Man*; his Conversation was edifying, witty, facetious, courteous and obliging; his Disposition sweet and inoffensive; his Principle just and loyal; his Endeavours to serve his Friends real and indefatigable; a most thankful Person when but never so little oblig'd, and a true lover of Mankind. For his Learning I dare not take upon me to tell the vastness of it, for that would speak that I knew all he was, which I am not so arrogant as to pretend to; but this I would say, that he had the Fancy of a *Poet*, and the Quickness and Understanding of an *Angel*: he soon saw into the bottom of any thing at first sight, and needed not second Thoughts, which made him a wise and judicious Counsellour, and very happy in satisfying any Scruples or Doubts, in matters of Religion, and enabled him to do any thing that he pleased. But then as a *Bishop*, he was such a one as *St. Paul* describes to *Timothy*, of an Exemplary Life, a Primitive Simplicity, and a Singular Wisdom, in governing his Clergy; nei-

neither blameable, remiss in making them do their Duties, nor so superciliously severe, as not to encourage them as Brethren: In a word, he had all of Worth in himself, and Kindness to others, as can make us sensible of his Loss, and qualify himself for those great Happinesses he is now possess'd of; and more I forbear to say, because I cannot say enough. Yet I desire, as *Themistocles* used to say, That the Trophies of *Miltiades* would not suffer him to sleep for Emulation, so let us exercise our Ambition (and in this case we may lawfully do it) in imitating this our Reverend and Venerable Father, in all those Virtues and Graces that were so conspicuous in him, that so we may arrive at that *Blessed Rest from Labour*, and Crown of Glory which he has prepared for him; and then we may with confidence say, *Return unto thy Rest my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt graciously with thee; he hath delivered my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling, and we go to the Bosome of Abraham to Paradise, to the new Jerusalem, the City of God, Mount Sion, the Church of the First born, to the innumerable Company of Angels, to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Christ our Redeemer. We follow thee, Lord Jesus. And that we may follow thee, do thou enable us, thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life,*

Life, our Hope and Reward; the Life wherein we hope, the Way wherein we move, and the Truth wherein we have our Being; thou that art the Way receive us, thou that art the Truth confirm us, and thou that art the Life quicken us, that we may so long serve and praise thee here in the Church Militant, until we come to sing among the Cherubims, and Seraphins in the Church Triumphant, and with this departed Saint, Holy. Holy, Holy Lod God of Sabbath; to the Eternal Trinity, three Existences in one Essence, three Persons and one God, be all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

DIS.

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St. P A U L's

Confession of Faith :

O R,

Catholick Religion asserted by St. Paul,
and maintain'd in the CHURCH of
E N G L A N D, in Opposition to the
Errors in the Church of Rome.

I N A

S E R M O N

Preached at St. Warbrough's Church in
Dublin, 1686.

The P R E F A C E to the Reader.

S I N C E the preaching of the ensuing
Sermons, I find, that both it, and the
Author, have undergone various Censures:
Some object Unseasonableness against it, and
others, Disloyalty; and for this reason, being
not willing to lie under that Imputation; and
being conscious to my self, that I never enter-
tain'd so much as a disloyal Thought, I am re-
solved the Sermon shall shift for it self: But I

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am a little more concern'd to satisfy the World, as to its Seasonableness, because even some of my Friends seem unsatisfied. What need you, say they, meddle with such a Subject? Why at this Time? Could you not let Things run quietly? and be content to preach (if you must be preaching) the Principles and Motives of and to a good Life, without meddling with Controversies and Disputes?

I must confess, if those Principles, against which I preach'd, had no Influence on Men's Lives, or were not pernicious to their Souls, I should be of their Opinion; but being convinced of both, this alone is sufficient for justifying what I have done. But I am resolved to be ingenious with the World, and discover the true Motives that put me on this Subject. I found that one of the Clergy of Dublin, tho' a very loyal Person, for his imprudent meddling with the State, had been justly suspended by his Diocesan; and that the People (who seldom know or consider the true Causes of Things) thought this Punishment was imposed on him, for arguing for our Religion; the tender Sense they have for that, put them into mighty Fears and Despondencies, and made them reflect upon the Clergy; as if they must either decline the Defence of the Truth, which they value above their Lives, or be silenc'd: I easily saw what ill Effects such Surmises might produce: And altho' several private Clergy-men said enough to satisfy the People of the falseness of the

Con-

Conclusion they drew from that Accident ; yet seeing them still dissatisfied, I consider'd, to remove their Jealousies, was a Work proper for one of an higher Degree in the Church ; and being invited to preach at St. Warbrough's, where there is generally a very full Auditory, I was glad of the Opportunity of discharging my Duty, and satisfying the People, and convincing many Roman Catholicks, who were then present to spy out our Liberty, that we had, and would take the same Liberty as ever to defend our own Religion, and to shew the Falshood of theirs ; and I have some reason to believe, that what I then delivered had a good effect on their Minds, both as to the Government, and the Clergy.

But I must further tell these Gentlemen, That whatever Policy may seem to be in being silent at this time ; it is too mean, and has too much of the World in it ever to be expected from a Clergy-man, especially, it cannot from a Bishop, whose very Consecration obliges him to preach and drive away all erroneous and false Doctrine, contrary to God's Word, and both privately and openly to call upon, and encourage others to the same : Such we believe the Doctrines of the present Church of Rome to be ; and while we do so, it is not to be expected that any worldly Consideration should prevail with us to be silent ; our Vows oblige us to the contrary ; and the Charity which we owe to the Souls of Men, is a farther

tye upon us, to warn them of the Danger they bring upon themselves by listning to such Doctrines, or persevering in them, tho' they have embrac'd them..

We are persuaded our Silence in this Case would prejudice our own People against Us, and the Truth, and flatter our Adversaries with Hopes of our going over to them, and so confirm them in their pernicious Errors: Let who so will hold such Errors, Truth is Truth, and must be defended: And if the Romanists will but do as they would be done by, they cannot take this ill at our Hands; especially, while we have not only the Law on our sides, but also the Word of that King, (who is famous for having never broken it) to defend our Religion: And if they be angry for this, we cannot help it, Truth is dearer to us than their Favour.

We look on the Supremacy of the Pope, and his unjust Usurpation over our Kings, and his Fellow Bishops, as the Fundamental Article of Popery: And it is required, by the Second Canon of the Church of Ireland, of every Preacher, to the utmost of his Wit, Knowledge, and Learning, to preach against it Four times a Year: And the Twelfth Canon further requires, That the Ministers in all their Preachings, &c. shall teach the People to place their whole trust and confidence in God and not in Creatures, neither in the Habit or Scapular of any Fryar, or in Hallowed Beads, Medals, Relicks, or such like Trumperies. And while

while these Canons stand in force, we will, we must do our Duty according to them; and the Government would have just reason to take Notice of us if we should omit it: And till I see better reason, than I have yet heard, I must think my Sermon a very seasonable Intimation of our Resolution of being true and steady to our Laws, Oaths, and Duties, and that it will be impossible to withdraw us from those Principles of Religion which we profess, and upon strict and diligent Examination know, not only to be true, but necessary also, even in such a degree as to concern the Salvation of Mankind.

And let the Romanists take it as they please, they must expect a great many such, and blame themselves that this does now appear in Print: Because the false Representation they made of what was then said, hath made this Publication of it necessary; and these two following Letters written to me on that Occasion hath convinced me of that Necessity.

My very good Lord,

YOUR Lordship's late Sermon, preached at *St. Warbrough's Church in Dublin*, has given me an Occasion of representing the several Censures upon it, to your Lordship, and withal, of freely communicating my Thoughts to you concerning it. The Gentlemen, who would pass for the only Catholicks in the World, censure it as disloyal, and tending to Sedition: The Phnaticks are offended because you boldly tell them the Truth, and lay the blame of our present Misfortunes (where it is justly chargeable) at their Doors: And there is a third sort of Men, whom I may call the Politicians of the Age, that do not condemn, but only censure some Things in it as unreasonable, and not fit to be spoken in these Times.

It was my Misfortune not to be present at the Delivery of it; but however, upon the Experience of above Thirty Years Acquaintance with your Lordship, I can vouch as much for your Loyalty as my own, and do really, in my Conscience, acquit you from any Design of influencing the People; and when I reflect upon the Saying of *St. Paul*, Gal. 1. 10. *If I please Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ*. I am well assured, you discharged a good Conscience towards God, because you have been so little solicitous to study the Satisfaction of the World.

How-

However, because so many various Censures are past upon it already, and neither you nor I can foresee what Misconstructions may be made of it for the future ; and because some Things are reported of it, which I hear, were not delivered, to your Prejudice ; I think, you cannot do your self, nor your Sermon, greater Justice, than to expose it to the publick View of the World, and let it plead its Cause against all Gain-sayers : By this you will have an Opportunity of vindicating your Loyalty against the Exceptions of the pretended Catholicks ; your Prudence against the temporizing Politicians ; and your Doctrine against all that are resolved to write against it ; And I am confident, let them begin when they will, if you need Succours, the Cause will not want those that shall assist. I am

Your Lordship's

Most Affectionate

Humble Servant,

A. Midenfis.

This was followed by this Second Letter.

My Lord,

I Had the Happiness to hear your last Sermon at *St. Warbrough's*, and find, by my conversing amongst the People, that it gave general Satisfaction, and has done really a great deal of good. They imagine that your Lordship, by your Station and Correspondence, understands much of Affairs; and they generally conclude, by your Behaviour in that Sermon, That we are very secure in the King's Royal Word. You would hardly imagine how far this hath quieted some suspicious Minds; and if your Lordship would let your self be prevailed with to make it Publick, I am confident it would contribute yet more to secure the Loyalty, and quiet the Fears of the People: And though this may seem unnecessary to your Lordship, it being impossible any one of our Communion should be disloyal, without renouncing his Religion; yet give me leave to inform your Lordship, that there neither doth, nor will, want those, that having nothing to say to it, as it is, will not fail to misrepresent it: To prevent therefore them, if not to satisfy your Friends, I hope you will be persuaded to comply with the Request of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble

and dutiful Servant,

W. King

From these Two Letters the Readers may see the Sense of both Adversaries and Friends, and what Effect it had on them, and especially the People; and by Publishing of it, I hope at least, to get this Advantage, that our Adversaries will be afraid to misrepresent future Discourses of this kind, when they see we have already and short a way to expose their Lies: and let them rest satisfied, that notwithstanding their causeless Heights, and the confident Brags of some of them, That our Religion shall soon be suppress'd; and the Wheedles of others of them, by which they think to prevail with us, if not to come over to theirs, yet to speak nothing in Confutation of it; we both dare and will justify our Selves and our Religion, against all the little petty Arts of Defamation or Calumny they can use against us; and that we believe the chiefest of their Strength consists in these.

I have only this one Thing more to add, That this Sermon is printed as it was preached, without any Alteration; and that it is own'd to be the true Sense and real Expression of the Thoughts and Heart of the Preacher.

St. PAUL's

My Lord,

I Had the Happiness to hear your last Sermon at *St. Warbrough's*, and find, by my conversing amongst the People, that it gave general Satisfaction, and has done really a great deal of good. They imagine that your Lordship, by your Station and Correspondence, understands much of Affairs; and they generally conclude, by your Behaviour in that Sermon, That we are very secure in the King's Royal Word. You would hardly imagine how far this hath quieted some suspicious Minds; and if your Lordship would let your self be prevailed with to make it Publick, I am confident it would contribute yet more to secure the Loyalty, and quiet the Fears of the People: And though this may seem unnecessary to your Lordship, it being impossible any one of our Communion should be disloyal, without renouncing his Religion; yet give me leave to inform your Lordship, that there neither doth, nor will, want those, that having nothing to say to it, as it is, will not fail to misrepresent it: To prevent therefore them, if not to satisfy your Friends, I hope you will be persuaded to comply with the Request of,

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St. PAUL's

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DISCOURSE XII.

St. Paul's Confession of Faith.

ACTS XXIV. 14, 15, 16.

But this I confess unto Thee, that after the way which they call Heresie, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust. And herein do I exercise my self, to have a Conscience void of offence towards God and towards Man.

TWO things are required in a Preacher, to be able to exhort with wholesome Doctrine, and to confute Gain-sayers; the one requires Rhetorick, the other Logick. We cannot have a better Precedent for this than *St. Paul*; whom for his admirable Elocution the Infidels took for *Mercury*, their God of Eloquence, come down from Heaven; and for the profoundness of his matter, he is

* *Doctr.*
Christian.
 † *Annot. in*
N. T. g.

is stiled a *chosen Vessel*, to contain the My-
 steries of Gods Kingdom : For proof of
 this, I will only instance to you from the
 33^d of the 8th of the *Romans*, to the end
 of that Chapter, whereof * *St. Austin* and
 † *Erasmus* say, that never *Tully* nor *Domos-*
thenes could speak any thing like him ; there
 being nothing mean or low in the whole ;
 for if we respect the Persons, here we have
 God, Christ at the right hand of the Father,
 Principalities and Powers ; if we respect the
 things, here we have Life, height, depth,
 things present, and things to come : And if
 we respect the Rhetorical Ornaments, what
 Interrogations, what Gradations, what An-
 titheses, what Contraries, and what Repeti-
 tions : So that this might justly make up
 the 3^d part of *St. Austins* wish, that he had
 seen Christ in the Flesh, *Rome* Flourishing,
 and *St. Paul* Preaching. But I need no fur-
 ther Arguments, this very conflict with *Ter-*
tullus is a sufficient Demonstration ; where-
 of my Text is a part : For having clear'd
 himself from that most odious crime of Se-
 dition, and evidently proved that the Ora-
 tors Accusation was not only improbable,
 but impossible : He now descends to the o-
 ther branch of his Calumny concerning his
 Religion ; that as he was no turbulent Fel-
 low, no raiser of Sedition in the Common-
 wealth ; so he was no setter forth, nor main-
 tainer of Heretical Doctrines, or Noveltyes
 in the Church.

In the words we have these two parts.

1. His Concession, in these words, [*but this I confess.*]

2. His Confession, in these words, [*after the way which they call Heresie, &c.*]

And in his Confession we have these particulars;

1. The Act, *I Worship.*

2. The Object, *The God of my Fathers.*

3. The Manner, *after that way which they call Heresie.*

4. The Rule of it, *believing all things that are written in the Law, and the Prophets.*

5. The Principal ground of it, *and have hope towards God, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead.*

6. And lastly, the Effect of it, *and herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience void of offence toward God, and toward Man.*

So that if you would have a clear and perfect definition of St. Paul's Religion, it is briefly this; *A Worshipping of one true God by Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, with a stedfast endeavour to keep the purity of the Conscience unspotted, in hopes of the future Resurrection of the Dead.* But to proceed.

1. Of his Concession, *but I confess.*

From which Ingenious Confession of his Faith before an Heathen, we may learn our own Duty; *whosoever will confess me before* *Matt. 10. 32.*
Men,

Men, him will I confess before my Father which is in Heaven: And with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation. Isaiah Prophesied of the times of the Gospel, that one should say, I am the Lords, and another should be called by the name of Jacob; and another should subscribe with his hand, and name himself by the name of Israel: And 'tis required, that not only every Knee should bow, but also that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.

The want of the means of this publick Confession, made the Jews lament when they late by the Rivers of Babylon; and made Jeremy cry out, that the ways of Zion did Lament, because no Man cometh to the publick Assemblies. And the Thief on the Cross, for confessing Christ, was that day with him in Paradise: For the inward frame of the Heart is discovered by outward Devotion; and he that does not confess his Religion when he is put to it, either has none at all, or does not much care for it. God says not, I have reserved 7000 that have not believed in Baal, but whose Knees have not bowed to Baal; which shews, that he expects a publick owning of him, as well as a secret believing in him; and the Devil himself did not tempt Christ to believe in him, but to fall down and worship him; and the three Children chose to be burned, rather

rather than give Adoration to *Nebuchadnezzars* Golden Image.

I know *Naamans* example [*when I bow my self before the Idol Rimmon*] 2 King. 5. is much objected against what I have said; but for answer to this, consider first, that *Naaman* was then but a Novice in Religion, and had not yet learned to deny himself for God. 2. *Naaman* speaks not of any Religious Worship to be performed to *Rimmon*; but of a civil Office to be done to his Prince. 3. Because *Naaman* knew that this Action could not but be scandalous to others, and polluted with the circumstance of Time and Place, he confessed it was a Sin, and desires God's mercy. Lastly, we do not find that *Naaman* ever did it, but only feeling or fearing his own infirmity, he desires the Prophets Prayers, either that he might not fall, or if he did, that God would forgive him; to which the Prophet assents, and that only in such a form of speech, as is an usual Vale-diction, as Go in peace, or Gods peace be with you.

There are two main impediments of this publick Confession of Christ, Shame and Fear. They that are ashamed, are such as love the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God. When *Ulysses* taught young *Neoptolemus* the Art of Lying, the youth being of an ingenuous nature, ask'd him, how it was possible to tell a Lye without blushing; he answered

answered him, that a Man ought never to be ashamed of any thing, whereby profit may be had. And if we seriously consider it, 'tis strange that any Christian should be ashamed of his Profession, which brings him so great gain, as an eternal weight of Glory. We have a common Proverb, that he that is ashamed of his Trade, shall never thrive by it; and 'tis altogether as true, that he shall never save his Soul by Religion, who is ashamed to profess it. 'Tis confess'd, the time was, when *Nicodemus* came by Night to Jesus; and when *Joseph of Arimathea* was a secret Disciple; but it was when they were punies in Christianity: But when Religion was firmly rooted in them, they joyned openly in the honourable Interment of our Saviour; and thus *St. Paul* confess he was not *ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*.

The second impediment is Fear; This caused *Moses* to stagger at the Commands of God; this made *Elisha* fly from the Womanish threats of *Jezabel*, and *St. Peter* deny his Master. Fear is so bad a Counsellor

Rom. 1. 16. in the Service of God, that *Gideon* when he was ready to joyn battel with the Enemy, proclaimed, that whosoever was fearful should depart; and so timorous Christians are not fit to fight the Lords Battles: Therefore 'tis said, *the Fearful, and the Unbelievers, and the Abominable, shall have their Portion*

Judg. 7. 3.

Rev. 21.

tion

tion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.

I never heard nor read of a more resolute Band of Soldiers, than those Seditious followers of *Cataline*, their Souls flitted from their Bodies before they moved from their Stations; and the place they fought on when alive, they covered with their Bodies when Dead: And the Historian tells you, the reason was, because they carried their * Riches, their Glory, their Life, their Liberty, their Country, and all their hopes in their right Hand. Change but the Persons and the Story is ours; for in our Christian Warfare we bear a Crown of Glory, Eternal Life, Spiritual Liberty, and our Heavenly Country in our right Hand, and to him only that overcomes, shall all this be given: *For be thou faithful to the End, and I will give thee the Crown of Life.*

*Salust.
Bello Catalini.*

**Divitias,
Decus, Gloriam preterea libertatem, atque patriam, in dextris vestris portare.*

Rev. 2. 10.

Yet neither St. Paul's Practice, nor my Discourse, does encourage any to run into unnecessary dangers; for he that loves Danger, shall perish in it. To precipitate a Mans self into needless Peril, is senseless Folly; and to do it out of Ostentation, is meer Vanity: But when a Mans Profession obliges him to give Evidence for the Truth, to be then neither ashamed of Christ, nor of his Gospel, nor fearful to suffer for it, is necessary true Christian Courage.

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The Antient Law of governing the *Roman* Army was reduced to two Heads, *nec sequi, nec fugere*; not too venturesomely, to make a rash pursuit without need; and when there was occasion, nor by too timorously running away to betray the cause to the common Enemy: And thus a Christian ought not to seek danger when he is free, nor to shun it when it is offered. Behold, says Christ, *I send you forth as Lambs in the midst of Wolves, be ye therefore wise as Serpents, and innocent as Doves.*

There is a time when the Advice of *Gellius* takes place even in Religion; that when the City labours with Sedition, 'tis not the part of a good Citizen to profess himself a Neuter, but to joyn with the party that has right on its side, and so help to suppress the other; and again there is a time, when the example of *Leontius* Bishop of *Antioch* is more imitable: That is, to give offence to neither Party; for *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* And thus much of the first thing, *viz.* the Confession, in these words, [*but this I confess.*]

Before I speak of the Confession, which is the next thing, I will only remark this to you; that *St. Paul* first clears himself from being a Rebel against the State, before he attempts to prove the Orthodoxy of his Faith, or the purity of his Religion: From whence I desire you to observe, that those
Men

Men that profess never so much of Religion with never so much Zeal, are to be lookt upon as false Teachers, so long as they continue their rebellious and seditious practices against the State: And therefore let our dissenting Brethren take notice, that while they in contempt of Authority oppose the establish'd and known Laws, by their Riotous, unlawful Assemblies, that their Religion and Profession of Faith is false and erroneous, and quite contrary to St. Paul's here in my Text: Which is the next thing that I am to handle, in these words, [*I worship the God of my Father, &c.*]

And in this I shall first speak of the Act *Worship*, and in doing thereof, I will not spend time in confuting that frivolous distinction of the Papists, of *Latria*, *Dulia*, and *Hyperdulia*; the first they say, is that Worship which is proper to God; the second, which is due to the Creature; and the third of a middle nature, less than what is due to God, and more than is due to the Creature, and this (they say) is only due to the Virgin *Mary*. I know they have borrowed this distinction from St. *Austin*; but have much wrested it from his Sense: For as they have added a third member to the distinction, (to wit) *Hyperdulia*: So it is certain, that St. *Austin* by *Dulia* did not understand any religious or spiritual Worship, which is only due to God; but an External

* *Servitus*
corporis
non animæ.
de vera Re-
lig. c. 55.
ibidem.

civil Worship, such as Men give to Princes, Masters, and Pastors: * a service of the Body, but not of the Mind, as *he* speaks.

The Saints indeed *are to be honoured for Imitation; but not to be adored for Religion.* Neither does that *Father* say, that Saints are to be worshipt with an inferiour kind of religious Worship, called *Dulia*; but the express contrary; *for we honour them* (says he) *with the honour of Love and Fellowship, as our Brethren and Friends: but not with Service, as our Masters and Commanders.*

Honoramus
eos Chari-
tate, non
Servitute.
ibid.

We do not deny that there are degrees of Honour: But to attribute the least degree of the Service of the Spirit to any Creature, we abhor, because that is solely due, and proper to God, who only, in all times, places, and things, sees, guides and disposes of all, us, and ours. God is *not mocked*; and therefore will not suffer his own express Word to be eluded with such frivolous distinctions.

But as one complained, that the Laws were like Spiders Webbs, wherein the little Flies are taken, but the great ones break through; so we may say of these Popish Subtilties, because, that though they cannot cast a mist before the eyes of God, and rational considering Men, yet they may deceive the poor, simple Lay-Papist; who goes on roundly to work in his blind Devotion, *he*, poor Man, must needs remain intangled in

in gross Idolatry. And therefore these Popish Ring-leaders are not unfitly compared as *Bawds*, (it is King *James* his expression in the like case) who though they do not actually pollute their own Bodies; yet are a means of prostituting others to all filthiness. But I leave them and return to our Apostles [*I worship the God of my Fathers,*] this worship is twofold. 1. External. 2. Internal. The external worship is principally threefold.

1. The preaching and hearing of Gods Word.

2. The invoking of his Name.

3. The reverend use of the Holy Sacraments.

1. As to the preaching and hearing of Gods Word, he requires nothing more earnestly, than that the People be taught the knowledge of themselves, of God, and of Religion; *Son of Man*, saith God, *cry aloud* Isai. 58. 1. *and spare not, lift up thy voice like a Trumpet,* Matt. 28. *and go and teach all Nations,* 1 Cor. I. 16. saith Christ; *2 Tim. 4.* *and Wo is me,* saith the Apostle, *if I preach* 1, 2. *not the Gospel;* and he charges *Timothy* *before God, and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both the quick and the dead, that he preach the Word, and be instant in season, and out of season.*

And as preaching is the Ministers Duty, Rom. 10. so it is the Peoples to hear: *for how can they* 14. *believe in him, of whom they have not heard:* Prov. 29. 18.

and where there is no Vision the People perish. Faith is like the Lamp, and the preaching of the Word like Oil; and as the Lamp without a fresh supply of Oil does go out, so Faith does decay without Preaching:

Mark 6.34. Wherefore it is written of our Saviour, that when he found a Multitude without a Pastor, *he was moved with Compassion towards them.*

The second part of this external worship is Invocation of his Name; and this is so natural to us, that we usually lift up our eyes to Heaven in any suddain exigence, *Pf. 50. 15.* even before we consider the Danger, or consult our Reason; and God commands us to call upon him *in the day of trouble, and he will hear us.* This is so prevalent that it binds up the hands of the Almighty; *Let me alone,* saith God to Moses, *that my wrath may wax hot against them.* No marvel then that St. James says, *the Prayer of the faithful availeth much, if it be fervent.* In a word, he that does not Pray, is an Atheist; for *Pf. 53. 2.* David saith, that only *the Fool, who saith in his Heart, there is no God, doth not call upon the Name of the Lord.*

I fear, if measures were taken of our being or not being Atheists, by the frequency of our Prayers, there are too many amongst us, that could scarcely free themselves from that imputation: unless to come to this place once or twice upon a Sunday, and that

that too, more out of Custom, than Devotion, and never to think more of their Duty till *Sunday* come again, does acquit them from that charge. But remember, God will be called upon; or he will not deliver.

The third part of this External Worship is the reverend use of the Sacraments; and let me tell you, they are not indifferent things, which we may use, or not use, at our pleasure; as *Esther* said, *If I perish, I perish*. There is a more Christian [*If*] in *Mat. 28.* the case, that is, if we obey the Commands of Christ, we must use them; for *he* says, *Go teach all Nations, Baptising them, and take ye, eat ye, drink ye.* *Mat. 26. 2. 27.*

Lycurgus the *Lacedæmonian* Lawgiver, (to oblige them to a more strict observance of his Laws) made the *Lacedæmonians* take an Oath to observe them till his return, and then took a Journey, with a resolution never to go back again: and caused his Ashes to be thrown into the Sea, lest his People finding them, should think themselves absolv'd from their Oath.

And thus our Saviour Jesus Christ being to leave his Disciples, obliges them to the use of his Sacraments, till his return, never intending to return again in humility, but in glory: If a dying friend should give you a Ring as a token of his Love, and charge you to keep it for his sake, would you despise an instance of so great a Kindness?

How comes it then to pass, that we so little value so inestimable a Jewel, as the blessed Sacraments, which are the Badges of our Christianity, whose Value and Dignity does not flow from the outward Elements? For what is the sprinkling of a little Water? The eating of a bit of Bread, or the drinking of a cup of Wine? But from the Ordinance and Institution of Christ, just as a piece of Wax, with the Kings Broad Seal stamp'd upon it, is of more value, than a thousand times so much in the Merchants Shop.

And truly, if we would be taken for Christ's Soldiers, we ought not to be ashamed of his Mark, the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

There are two things generally objected by many that are called Christians, against receiving of it; the one is, that if they partake of it unworthily, it will prejudice them: Such would do well to consider; that until they put themselves into a condition of receiving it Worthily, they cannot be in a condition of dying; and how dangerous it is not to be always so, the uncertainty of this life does shew.

The other Objection is, That they are not yet willing to part with their Sins, to which the receiving of the Sacrament obliges them; and therefore they will defer Communicating until they are Old, and

have

have a mind to repent, and part with their Sins. Such would do well to consider that they may fall short of the time, they design for that Work ; or if they should not, that God may not give them grace to Repent. And thus much of External Worship, which I told you consists in Preaching and Hearing, in Invocation, and the reverend use of the Sacraments.

The other part of his Service, is, Internal ; that is, the worship of the Spirit, without which all our Preaching, Hearing, Praying,; Christning, and Communicating, are like a Sepulcher outwardly, beautiful ; but inwardly, full of Corruption : For though the outward form is that which approves us to Man ; yet it is the inward frame that justifies us to God. Who does not like such Professors as * *Hosea* compares to a half baked Cake ; and *Ezekiel* to a Pot, whose scum * Cap. 7 8. cap. 24. 6. Joh. 4. 24. is therein : For God is a Spirit, and he will, nay, he must be worshipt in Spirit and Truth.

Some there are, who, with *Esop's* Dog, snatch at the Shadow, and lose the Substance ; that is, place the whole worship of God in bodily Exercise, and external Adoration ; as bowing before a Crucifix, in creeping to a Cross, in running a bare-leg'd Pilgrimage, in visiting the Reliques of the Saints, in hearing of so many Masses, in macerating the Flesh, in hanging down the Head

head for a day like a Bulrush, in Crosses, and Candles, in Holy Waters, and Holy Oils, in Pixes, and Paxes, and such like fopperies.

And there are others, who (like *Lapwings*, make the greatest noise when they are farthest from their young ones) though they pretend the greatest distance from the Papists, yet come very near them in many things, and place their whole Religion in running through thick and thin, three or four Miles on a Sunday to hear a Man Preach, or rather prate Nonsense; in carrying a Bible under their Arms, though they neither understand it, nor draw any Inferences from it, for the amendment of their Lives and Practices: In condemning all as Reprobates, that are not of their own Communion, and in applying the intricate and mysterious places of Scripture, especially such as denounce God's Judgments, to those that are not of their own Perswasion. And if they can but prate like Parrots in the Scripture Phrase, and sing three or four Psalms upon a Lords Day, and repeat at Night the Nonsense they heard in the Morning; nay, if they commend the Preacher for bawling loud, and making wry faces, and thumping the Pulpit, and holding forth for two or three Hours, and Preaching off Book such stuff as is impossible for a considering Person to write; they conclude they have worship'd

ship'd God sufficiently, and that no more is required of them. And truly though this is very far from being acceptable to God, yet I wish we had not too just cause, on the other hand, to complain, that Internal Worship is too much slighted by us, and Prayers and Sacraments too much neglected; and that as in times of Popery all Religion and Worship was in a manner reduced to a Mass, so now amongst us to a Sermon, *they seeing without understanding*, and we hearing without practising.

Thus much for the first Particular, to wit, the Act, in which I have spoken of the external and internal Worship due to God. I now proceed to the second particular in the Confession; and that is the object of his worship, *the God of my Fathers*.

Observe no Saint, no Angel, no Creature, nor Throne, no Dominion, nor Power, no Heathenish Deity, but the only true God in Jesus Christ. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Exod. 20. And, *See thou do it not*, (saith the Angel in the Revelations to St. John;) *I am thy fellow Creature, worship God.* Ch. 22. 9.

The *Manichees* worship'd two Gods, a God of Good, and a God of Evil; and the *Tritheists* three Gods, whence they had their name; the *Valentinians* worship'd thirty couple of Gods, and the *Gentiles*, as St. *Augustin* observes, thirty thousand Gods; thence they

De Deo
quo & ut
re.

they worship'd their Adulterous *Jupiter*, their Beastly *Apollo*, their Drunken *Bacchus*, their Bastardly *Æsculapius*, their Thievish *Mercury*, their Bloody *Mars*, their Impudent *Venus*, and their Spiteful *Juno*; as *Zanchy* observes. And the Papists have equall'd, if not exceeded, the Heathens in the number of their Gods, and their superstitious Ceremonies; as may appear by the practice of the common People in these particulars.

1. the *Pagans* had their several titular Gods for several places; for *Delphos* worshipped *Apollo*, *Crete*, *Jupiter*, *Athens* *Minerva*, and *Ephesus* *Diana*: And so in Popery, *England* worship'd *St. George*, *Scotland* *St. Andrew*, *Ireland* *St. Patrick*, *Venice* *St. Mark*, and *Millain* *St. Ambrose*.

2. In Paganism they had several Gods for several Elements; as *Jupiter* for the Fire, *Juno* for the Air, and *Neptune* for the Sea: And so in Popery, they have *Agathus* for the Fire, *Theodulus* for Tempests, *St. Barbara* for Thunder, and *St. Nicholas* for the Sea.

3. In Paganism they had several Gods to pray to for their Cattel, and their Fruit; as *Pan* for the one, *Ceres* for the other, and *Bacchus* for their Wine: And so in Popery they have *Urbanus* for their Wine, *Jodocus* for their Fruit, *Wandelinus* for their Sheep, *Eulogius* for their Horses, and *St. Anthony* for their Pigs.

4. In

4. In Paganism several Professions had several Gods to Pray to ; as Scholars *Apollo*, Soldiers *Mars*, Smiths *Vulcan*, and Hunters *Diana* : So in Popery, Scholars have St. *Gregory*, Soldiers St. *George*, Smiths St. *Loy*, and Shoemakers St. *Crispin*.

5. In Paganism they had several Gods to pray to in several Diseases ; as *Apollo* for the Plague, *Hercules* for the falling Sickness, and *Lucina* for Women in Childbirth ; and so in Popery, St. *Roch* for the Plague, *Petronella* for the Ague, *Apollonia* for the Tooth-ach, *Anastasis* for the Head-ach.

Lastly, To these, both *Pagans* and *Papists* build Churches, and erect Altars, ordain Priests, appoint Festivals, set up Statues, and burn Candles, as *Musculus* observes ; they did not learn this from the Apostle, the sole object of whose religious worship was the God of his Fathers, that is, the God whom his Fathers worship'd.

There can be nothing more opprobriously objected in Religion than Novelty ; *There are a People who have made Laws of their own*, said *Haman* of the *Jews*, and the *Areopagites* of St. *Paul*, *Let us hear what new Doctrine this is ?* For Innovation diminishes the venerable Authority of Religion : And therefore it is the Politicians Rule, not to remove an ill custom when well settled : The very Names of our Fathers and Predecessors sway much ; for the Women of *Samaria*,
you

you know, alledged the example of her Fathers against Gods Commands; *Our Fathers,* *Joh. 4. 20.* says she, *worship'd in this Mountain;* but our Saviour tells her, *Salvation is of the Jews.* And the *Gentiles* excepted against Christianity, because they would not condemn the ways of their Fathers; but keep to, and preserve those Rites which descended to them from Age to Age; and the Hereticks themselves, to gain credit to their Tenents, were used to say, so I have received, so I have been taught by the Fathers.

And the Romanists do not object any thing more maliciously, and falsely, to the ignorant amongst us, than that we had our Religion only from *Luther*, and *Calvin*, (which they themselves cannot but know in their Conscience to be otherwise) and that we swerve from the Judgment of the Primitive Fathers, and exclude our Predecessors from all hope of Salvation. But notwithstanding that they brag the Fathers are all theirs, like the Madman that challenged all the Ships that came into the Harbour for his own; yet it is evident to any one, that is but meanly conversant in reading their Authors; that they esteem the Fathers but as Counters, which at play are sometimes placed for Pounds, and sometimes for Pence; for where they seem to favour them, they commend and admire them; and where they are clear against them, they decry and de-

pise them. Otherwise, if the Fathers are theirs, and if they would have us believe they are their principal Witnesses, why do they cut out their Tongues with their false glosses, and expurgations of what they do not like?

The examples of our Progenitors, or Predecessors, are no infallible rules for us to follow; for we must not with the Pharisees transgress the *commands of God by the tradition of our Fathers.* Mat. 15.3.

We must not, with the Jews, Offer Sacrifice to the Queen of Heaven, because our Fathers did so, and it was well with them. Jerem. 44. 17. Jerem. 9. 14. Why did the Land perish, and was burnt up like a Wilderness? But because the People walked after Baalim, which their Fathers taught them. Therefore the Prophet says, Walk not in the ways of your Fathers; and Psal. 49. 19. they follow the generation of their Fathers, which shall not see the light.

3. We do not make the case of our Forefathers, that lived in Popery, so desperate as they represent it; for we do not question, but many of them held firm the Foundation, though much Hay and Stubble was built upon it: For though they might be forc'd by terror, or induced by sleight, to partake of the common errors of the Church of Rome; yet they might be free from its Heresie, and hold the Faith implicitly in *preparatione animi*, that is, be ready to embrace

brace it, when God should reveal it to them.

4. God might illuminate whom he pleas'd by his Spirit in those times of darkness, when the means of knowledge was wanting, (which is not now in this Sun-shine of the Gospel, to be expected) as he enlightned the World by an expanded Light before he created the Sun, which is since the ordinary way of giving Light; and as he fed the *Israelites* with *Manna* in the Wilderness, which he withdrew as soon as they came into the Land of Promise. For when ordinary means are afforded, extraordinary must neither be expected, nor relied upon: So that you see there is a vast difference between the case of our Forefathers, and the case of the Papists now; who wilfully shut their eyes against the Light offered to them. When the ordinary means fail'd, God was able to save, and did save in the midst of that Blindness, those that belonged to the Election of his Grace: But it cannot be therefore safe for us to neglect so great Salvation as is now offered to us, upon pretence of our Forefathers being otherwise principled.

Cypriani
Ep 63. p.
156. Edit.
Oxon. Si
quis de An-
tecessoribus
nostris, vel
ignoranter,
vel simpli-
citer, hoc
non obser-
vaverit,
&c.

If my Predecessors, says St. Cyprian, have not taught, or held, either through simplicity, or ignorance, that which our Lord has taught them, by his Example, or Authority, the Mercy of God might pardon them; but we cannot rely upon the like Mercy, who have so clear a

pro-

proposal of those Truths, which were concealed from them. It is indeed good Manners, and Charity, to think, hope, and speak well of our Fathers; but it is both Wisdom and Divinity to look well to our selves.

I wish the Dissenters from our Church would seriously apply this to themselves; if they did, they must find their Case much worse than their Predecessors, because they at once tread out of their Ways, and walk not in ours. I am sure this disorderly tumultuous way of serving God, which the Separatists use, was never practised by any considerable Party in the Primitive-Times. And tho' I will not deny but several National Churches might differ from one another in their Forms of Worship, yet I never read nor heard of any who had not a Form by which they did worship, until our modern Presbyterians. This one Instance (I fancy) that they cannot pretend the Custom of the Fathers, for what they do, unless they will own none for such that lived above sixty Years ago, might be sufficient to make them at the same Instant leave off, and forsake their Folly. And I am persuaded that there are not any considerable Persons amongst them, but if they did seriously reflect, and calmly consider, how a great a Sin it is to make a Schism in, and separate from that Church,

Church, with which they own they agree in Doctrine, and is established by Law, for they know not what Reason, but because they will; I say, if they did think on this, and sadly reflect, that whatever the Church of *England* either has already, or may hereafter suffer through Popery, is wholly due to themselves; for having murdered the best of Kings, and forc'd his Royal Issue to seek for Safety under great Necessities in Popish Countries, and thereby expos'd them to the Dangers and Temptations of the *Romish* Clergy, who never fail to improve all Opportunities for the Advantage of the Church, or rather Court of *Rome*: I say, if they did think on this, they would now at least, being so very obnoxious, for their own Preservation, close with us in our Communion, and not separate from that Manner of Worship which we give to the *God of our Fathers*, with the Apostle here in the Text, which was the Object, and the second thing I was to speak of, and leads me to the manner of his *Worship*, which is the third Particular, in these Words, *after that way which they call Heresie*.

Whence we may first observe, that it is no new thing for Religion, and the Professors thereof, to be traduced: for Christ was scott at as a *Carpenter's Son*; and Christianity is called *Heresie*, and Christians

Gallileans; and this proceeds from the innate Malice and Ignorance that every Man has in him since the Fall; which, as the Spider extracts Poison out of the sweetest Flowers, makes the worst Interpretations of the best Things and Actions; so that if *David* dance zealously before the Ark, he shall not want a *Michal* to laugh at him; and if *Ezekiah* destroy Idolatry, some *Rabshekah* will not stick to say, *Is not this the God whose Altars Ezekiah broke down?* If *Mary Magdalen* pour a little Oyl on the Head and Feet of our Saviour, some *Judas* will be ready to say, *What needs this waste?* *Constantine*, for his Bounty to the Church, shall be called *Pupillus*, one that needs a Guardian; and *Theodosius* for his Piety, *Imbellis*, a Coward. But as the Moon goes on silently in her Course, tho' Dogs do bark at her, so let us go on in our Religious Worship, without regarding the Calumniations of our Adversaries.

2 Sam. 8.
14, 15, 16,

Joh. 11. 4

2. Observe, That if we be morally certain that what we profess is true, and according to God's Word, it matters not that the Papists call us Hereticks, and the Separatists call us Papists: Truth will justify it self. *St. Paul* you see is not offended that they call his Religion Heresie.

And this brings me to the fourth thing

in the Text, namely, the Rule, in these Words, *Believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets*. God, who requires Man to worship him, has prescribed a Rule for his Direction; and lest this Rule might be forgotten or corrupted in tract of time by a bare oral Tradition of it from Age to Age, he committed it to Writing; for tho' the Word spoken be more efficacious, yet the Word written is more durable: therefore it was that *Moses* was commanded to write the moral Law in two Tables; and that the Spirit in the *Revelations* says *write*; and here St. *Paul* makes the Rule of his Faith, *all that is written in the Law and the Prophets*.

It would not be proper now to dispute, whether it be necessary to Salvation for a Man to believe all that is written in the Old and New Testaments; and therefore I shall only (for resolving this Doubt, and many other Objections, that may follow thereupon) offer these few Particulars.

1. That every distinct Sentence of the holy Scriptures does command and require our Belief as much as the whole, or any one part of them.

2. That tho' a Man may be saved without knowing all that is contain'd in the Scriptures, yet if he refuse to give Credit to any part of them (when it is revealed

to

to him as such) he cannot be saved.

3. That every Man is not only obliged, under Pain of Damnation, to believe all that is Scripture, when revealed to him, but he is also bound to believe what is not revealed to him in Preparation of Mind.

4. That we may and ought to infer, from St. Paul's Words in the Text, that the Scriptures are a sufficient Rule of Faith, and that there is enough contain'd in them, without any other Additions, both for our Direction and Practice.

Yet I deny not, but that an undoubted Tradition, if were so well assured of the Truth of it, by a general Consent of all Ages, as we are of the Truth of the Scriptures, has the same Authority with Scripture; for until the Means of Salvation was fully perfected, and the Scriptures Scriptures committed to Writing, Tradition was the Rule: For St. Paul bids *Timothy to take heed to all that he had received, either by Word or Writing.* And tho' we do not, with the *Romanists*, allow Tradition to supplant the Scriptures, by giving it equal Authority with them, yet we allow much to an Apostolical Tradition; because it may be necessary, tho' not absolutely so, to the clearing and better understanding of some intricate and mysterious Passages in Scripture. And this

leads me to the fifth Particular in my Text, to wit, the principal Ground of his Confession, in these Words, *and have Hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust.*

From which we may first observe, that Prudence and Wisdom are consistent with true Religion; for you see St. Paul says, *which they themselves also allow*; that is, the *Pharisees*, who did believe a Resurrection; that by this Means he might gain their favourable Opinion, and so divide them and the *Sadducees*, who did deny a Resurrection. For God never gave a Man Religion with design to deprive him of the Use of his Reason, and to make him a meer Natural: He that Charges his Disciples to be *as innocent as Doves*, bids them be *as wise as Serpents*, and bids them to *beware of Men* that will *bring them into their Councils*; which shews that we must not, with the *Donatists* of old, and the *Quakers* now, court the Lash and the Prison, and seek for Occasions of Trouble. he only is the resolute Champion for *Christ*, that will neither for fear of suffering weakly betray his Cause, nor out of an ignorant Zeal run into needless Dangers.

2. We may observe from hence, that the Hope of the Resurrection of the Dead, is a most powerful Argument to persuade
Men

Mat. 16.

19, 17.

Men to believe, embrace, and practice the Christian Religion. For when a Man seriously considers that he is not only to give an Account here of what he has done, and that this Life does not set a Period to his Sufferings, or Rejoycings; but that he shall rise again, and undergo a new and impartial Tryal, and be for ever determined to live in eternal Bliss or Misery. This Consideration, (I say) as it will make every rational (not to mention pious) Man to live holily; so it will be a great Allay to his temporal Sufferings, to consider that he shall have *Joy in the Morning* of his Resurrection, *for the Heaviness* he endured in the *Night* of this Life. This was the Ground of St. Paul's free and publick Confession of his Faith. And thus I come to speak of the last Particular in the Text, namely the Effects, in these Words, *And herein do I exercise my self, to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.*

Whence we may observe, that the End of all religious Knowledge is Practice; for Christianity is an active Life, it is not to make a wry Face, and to put on a serious Look, and to talk piously, and to breath nothing but Scripture, that denominates a Man a true Believer; but it is an exercising ones self so, as to keep a clear Conscience towards God and Man. And therefore it is that St. Paul elsewhere exhorts

Mat. 3. 8.

to press forwards, and so to run as to win, and not to beat the Air. And our Saviour bids us *bring forth Works meet for Repentance.* And that we may do this, we must live unblameably towards God, our Neighbours, and our selves : If we be defective in the last two, we must also be faulty in the first ; because though there are some Offences more directly and immediately committed against God, than other ; yet all are against him ; For as much as they are Transgressions of his Laws : And therefore we must make it our chief Business : First, to give him his due, which is honouring and invoking his Name, acknowledge all we have to proceed from his free Grace ; and make him, as far as we are able, suitable returns of Praise and Thanksgiving ; And as we must behave our selves thus towards God, so we must deal uprightly with our Neighbours, we must carry Hony in our Mouths, that is, not injure them with false Reports, nor provoke them with bitter Language, and we must carry Charity in our Hands ; that is, relieve them to our Power, when their Necessities require it ; not wrong them by Violence or Fraud, nor exact upon their Necessities ; and we must carry a good Example in all our Actions. And, Lastly, as to our selves, we must take heed that we abuse not those parts and endowments which God gave us to be instrumental

mental to his Service by any kind of Excess, Riot or Intemperance; we must keep our Senses well govern'd in great equality; the Tongue under the Rule of Discretion, and the Heart in a firm Peace, free from all sensual distracting Thoughts; this is the true end of believing: otherwise our assenting to a Divine Truth, is no more than such a Faith as the Devils have, who *believe and tremble*, and are never the nearer Happiness: But our believing must include doing, and must carry along with it a *Conscience*, or Knowledge *void of offence, both towards God and towards man*. And thus I have spoken what I design'd at this time on this Subject, and shall conclude all with one word of Application. You have heard St. Paul's Confession of Faith: I beseech you examine your selves, and try whether you be of his Religion or not; if you be, I entreat you practise it.

2. If you have a clear Conscience, you need not regard the false Reports of others; for though it be a Misfortune to be undeservedly ill spoken of, yet it is a comfort that it is undeservedly. The Bird in the Breast makes sweeter Musick than the Praises of a thousand Flatterers. *I am grieved, (saith a Father) that they speak ill of me, and asperse me falsely; because they injure themselves, and not me, by their uncharitableness; for they cannot rob me of the*
pleasure

pleasure which a clear Conscience continually administers to me.

*Psal. 119.
105.*

*Lastly, That all of us may have this clear Conscience, let us be sure, with St. Paul, to walk by the Rule, the Word of God; that will be a *Lanthorn to thy feet, and a Light to thy paths*: And therefore do not imagine, that the carrying of your Bible to Church, and turning over the Leaves, and reading it carelessly, is all that is required of you; but be sure you practise what you read, and compare your actions with that Rule, and make them conformable to it: This will make you, not only Professors of St. Paul's Faith, but also partakers of his Happiness, where we shall see the Face of the living God clearly, and at the full, where the Beauties shall have no Veils to hide them from our Eyes, our Beings shall have no End, our Knowledge shall not be subject to Error, nor our Loves to Displeasure. O! what an excess of Happiness will it be, to enjoy all, and to desire nothing, to be a King without an Enemy, to be rich without Covetousness, and to be ever living without fear of Death; all which, God of his infinite Mercy vouch safe unto us all, through the merits of Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. *Amen.**

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XIII.

Of David's Triumphant Hymn.

PSALM lxxviii. Verses 1, 2.

Let God arise, let his Enemies be scatter'd; let them also that hate him flee before him as Smoak is driven away. As Wax melteth before the Fire, so let the Wicked perish at the Presence of God.

TH O' the Prophet *David*, for the admirable and Divine Splendor of his Elocution, and the Exact suitableness of his Expressions, exceeds all that went before him; as well he might, seeing he had tasted of all Waters, *Marah* as well as *Elim*, bitter as well as sweet, and therefore could speak experimentally of all Conditions. Yet in this Psalm, he so far exceeds himself,

self, that we must needs conclude him in some extraordinary Rapture of Joy when he compos'd it; the Key is so high, that it would be a Work for the most solid Artist to observe distinctly every Note of Musick, and that of Rhetorick that lies conceal'd in it. And yet there is enough in the very Surface and outward Dress of it, to affect the meanest Understanding of him that will but read it. *For here is Smoak vanishing, Wax melting, the Earth shaking, the Heavens dropping, the Mountains trembling, Kings flying, the Company of the Spear-men, and Multitude of the Mighty, humbling bringing pieces of Silver for Tribute; and on the other side, here is a Father of the Fatherless, a Defender of the Widows, and a Redeemer of the Prisoners. Nay, here is a gracious Rain, the Silver Wing of the Dove, the redness of Crimson, and the whiteness of Snow. And here is an ascending up on high, leading Captivity Captive, throwing about Medals, as at Princes Coronations. In a word, here is Victory and Triumph, Singers and Minstrels, and Damsels.*

The *Hebrews* refer all this, either to the promulgation of the *Law*, or to the Wars of *David*; or to the Destruction of *Zenacherib*, or to a Victory over *Gog and Magog*; to the two former of these probably, to the two latter improbably: Others refer it solely, to the Resurrection and Ascension

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cension of *Christ*, and to the Effusion of the *Holy Ghost*. Let God arise, that is, *Christ Jesus*, who is God over all, blessed for ever, from *Death*, and let his *Enemies*, that is the *Jews*, be scattered and dispersed over the face of the whole Earth, as they have been in Effect, above these sixteen hundred Years. Let them also that hate him, that is, the *Devils* flee before him, that is, leave their Oracles, Habitations and Temples. As *Smoak* and *Wax*; the ascending *Smoak* may signifie the *Heathen Philosophers*, puffed up with an Opinion of Learning and Wisdom, all whose Speculations vanished at the preaching of the Gospel, and the *Wax melting*, may signify the *Jewish Rabbies* and their Privileges, composed out of the Honey-Comb of the Law. And if you please to bring it home to our own Times, the proud aspiring *Schismatick*, is the ascending *Smoak*, and the *Heretical Justiciary*, is the melting *Wax*. That this mystical Sense is true, *St. Paul* in the 4th. and 8th. to the *Ephesians*, is a Witness beyond Exception, where he saith, *When he ascended upon high, he led Captivity Captive and gave Gifts for Men.*

But yet this is not the whole Truth, for when the *Ark* of God was lifted up, and set forward in the Wilderness, *Moses* used this very Form of Prayer in *Numbers* 10. 25. by which he wonderfully confirmed
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the Minds, and heightened the Courage of his Soldiers, in assurance of the Presence and Protection of God. In whose Steps *David* treads, using the same Form ; whether it was when he Conquer'd the *Jebusites*, and the *Philistins*, and brought the *Ark* of God to *Jerusalem* in Triumph, *2 Sam. 6. 17.* Or whether it was after his great Victory over the *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Ammonites* and *Assyrians*, to which some Expositors do the rather incline, because of the Gift, or Tribute here mention'd in this Psalm, I shall not now determine ; but withal, *David* knowing himself to be a Type of *Christ Jesus*, rests not here, but rises higher to a mystical description of the State of the *Messias* ; for that the *Ark* of the Covenant shadows out *Jesus*, *Mount-Sion*, *Heaven*, the introducing the *Ark* into *Jerusalem*, the Ascension of *Christ*, the Captivated Prisoners, *Sin*, *Death* and the *Devil* ; and from the stability of the *Ark*, he collects the perpetuity of the two Kingdoms of *David*, and the Son of *David*. And thus I have given you the full Scope of my Text, which whether it be a Prayer, *Let God arise*, or a Prophecy, *God will arise*, or an Hymn, the Future being put for a Present Tense, by an usual Idiotism of the *Hebrew*, is not much material to our purpose. And therefore before I divide the Words into Particulars, I shall premise

premise these two Things in general, as not unuseful.

First, That the Prophet *David*, tho' his Tongue was as the Pen of a ready *Writer*, thought it no Dishonour to himself, nor Affront to the Spirit of God, to borrow a set Form of Prayer from *Moses*: *Rabbi Solomon* adds, That these very Words were sung whenever the *Ark* of God went forward. *Let God arise*; and so likewise that other Form of Prayer at the setting down of the *Ark*, *Numbers* 10. 36. *Return, O Lord, unto the many Thousands of Israel*, is used with a very little Variation by the same Prophet: *Arise, O Lord, into thy Rest, thou and the Ark of thy strength*. And *David's* Form was after used by *Solomon* to a word, at the solemn Dedication of the *Temple*. *2 Chron.* c. 6. v. 4. and *Numb.* 6. 24. God himself prescribes a set Form of blessing the People: *On this wise shall ye bless the Children of Israel, the Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his Face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and grant thee Peace*. And certainly we cannot suspect *Ezekiah*, the great Reformer of the Church, to be a Favourer of Superstition; and yet we read in the second of the *Chronicles*, the 29. and 30, that he commanded the *Levites* to praise the Lord with the Words of *David* and *Asaph the Seer*.

And

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And *Ezras* the 3d and 10th, *The Priests and Levites praised the Lord after the Ordinance of David King of Israel*, and they sung together, *because he is good, and his Mercy endureth for ever*; and in all probability, the 118th *Psam* and the 102th, is a set Form of Prayer for the Afflicted, and the 29th *Psalms* for the Sabbath; and *Luke 11. 12. The Disciples say unto Christ, teach us to pray as John did his Disciples*; and he said, *when ye pray, say Our Father*; not after this manner, but even in these very Words: So here you see a twofold Argument for a set Form of Prayer, even from the New Testament, the Example of *St. John*, and the Command of *Christ*. I might add to these Testimonies of Scripture, the Practice and Authority of all the Churches that have ever been since *Christ* trod upon the Face of the Earth; the *Grecians, Latines, Russians, and Abyssins*, and tho' few of their Antient Liturgies are come to our Hands, and of those few, some very much corrupted; as in that which borrows the Name of *St. Chrysostom*, he himself is commemorated as a deceased Saint; yet we have the substance of them in the undoubted Works of *Justin Martyr*, and others of the Fathers, and some scatter'd pieces which are the same with ours in every Word; As, *Lift up your Hearts, we list them up to the Lord, and Christ have*
mercy

mercy upon us, and Lord have mercy upon us.

Now, to him that dares reject the universal and perpetual Practice of the Church of *Christ*, and thrust Order and Uniformity out of the World, upon a pretence of some little topical Arguments of his own; I shall give no other Answer, than that there is more hopes of a Fool, than of such a Man; mistake me not, I do not hereby argue against any ones exercising his Gifts in private, it not being fit, that any should be so great a Stranger to God, as not to be able in private to pour out his Soul and particular Wants before him. But I would not allow any to be so saucily familiar, as in publick to obtrude his own rude and indigested Conceptions upon him.

Nay, I further add (and I pray you take notice of it) that tho' we were sure of an Apostolical Spirit, that would suggest not only every thing fit to be prayed for, but every Word with which we ought to pray; yet Order and Uniformity, and the more sure Concurrence of the People, and also the Expression of our Communion and Fellowship with the Saints departed, are not only convincing Arguments for, but also require a set Form of Prayer, for *David* you see uses this set Form of Prayer which *Moses* first prescrib'd, *Let God arise.*

But then secondly, this rather seems to be an Imprecation than a Prayer: It may

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therefore not be thought improper to resolve why *David*, who was so conscientious towards *Saul* that persecuted him, so indulgent to *Absalom* that rebell'd against him, and so merciful to *Shimei* that cursed him, should at other times pour out such terrible **Execrations**, *as let their Table be made a Snare, let their Eyes be blind, let their Habitation be void, let them be wip'd out of the Book of the Living, let his Prayer be turned unto Sin, and let their Children be Vagabonds and beg their Bread; and thus Noah cursed Canaan, Let him be a Servant of Servants; Elias, the Captain and his Company, Let fire come down from Heaven and consume thee and thy fifty; St. Peter, Simon Magus, thy money perish with thee; and St. Paul, I wish they were cut off that trouble you.* Now for clearing of this Difficulty, we must examine whether the Cause be God's, or our own; for they were most zealous in God's Cause, but most patient in their own. And for your Direction herein, you must take notice that when we (only) are concerned, that of our Saviour's takes place; *bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you; bless I say, and curse not*, for we were created Men and Women, for the mutual Help and Comfort of each other and not Serpents to sting and poison one another; *and can the same Fountain send*

but sweet and bitter Water at the same time ? can Blessings and Cursings, says St. James, come out of the same Mouth ? and can the same Tongue bless God the Father, and curse Man made after his Image ? I confess indeed, that God's Cause and our own are sometimes so interwoven, that they hardly can be distinguish'd : and so it was in *Elias's* Case, when he cursed the Children that were worried by the Bears, he was called Baldpate, but the Word of God was contemned ; nor must we always in God's Cause itself use Execrations ; for when the Disciples would have called for Fire down from Heaven to consume those Cities that would not receive them, our *Saviour* reproved them with a *ye know not what Spirit you are of* ; what the *Prophets* and *Apostles* did upon the clear Revelation of the Will of God, must not be imitated by us, unless we had the same Authority. God's particular Instinct or Command was a sufficient Warrant for them, as the Law of God was in the case of Jealousie, to the Priests to curse the Woman if she was guilty, *that her thigh might rot, and her belly swell*, Numb. 5. 35, which otherwise would have been most unlawful. But, to conclude, it is not lawful in any case to wish Evil to a Man, much less Eternal Damnation, which we are too too apt upon every trivial Occasion to wish to our selves.

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As for Temporal Calamities, so far as they are profitable, and further our Conversion, we wish them to our selves, and we are not bound to wish better to our Neighbours; for the Rule is, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*, and upon this account only, it is lawful to pray with David, in *Psal. 38. 16. Make their faces ashamed, O Lord, that they make seek thy Name.*

But then too, it must be with these Cautions: *First*, That the Parties will not be reclaimed by Mercies: *Secondly*, That it proceed from Love, and desire of his Reformation: *Thirdly*, That it be with this Condition, that it may conduce to their Amendment; for oftentimes the Cross proves a Staff to drive Men further from God, as *Isai. 1. 5. Why should you be stricken any more, for you will revolt yet more and more*; but generally since we want the Spirit of the Prophets, it is safest to pray absolutely for their Conversion; for David's Imprecations were rather Predictions than Petitions. And having premised this as not unprofitable, I come now to speak more closely to the Words of the Text, *Let God arise*, &c. in which Words I shall consider these particulars: *First*, A Protector invoked, that is, God: *Secondly*, The Influence of this Protector, in the word *Arise*. *Thirdly*, The Object of this Influence *his Enemies*. *Fourthly* and *Lastly*, The Effect of this Influence upon this

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Object, *let them fly before him*; of these in their Order. And first of the Protector God, It is no new thing for the Ark to be stiled God, 1 Sam. 4. 7. *God is come into the Camp*, 2 Sam. 6. 14. *David danced before the Lord with all his might*, that is, before the Ark, which is therefore called God, because it was a special Type of *Jesus Christ*, and therefore it was made, *Exod. 24. 10.* partly of Gold, to express the Divine Nature, and partly of Shittim-Wood, to express his Humane Nature; and as that Wood is not capable of Corruption, so his Body was not subject to Putrefaction. Secondly, The Ark was incircled with a Crown of Gold, to shew that *Christ* is King of Kings. Thirdly, In the Ark were the two Tables of the Law, the Rod of Aaron, and the Pot of Manna; and *Christ* has fulfilled the Law for us, and in him Manna and the Rod, that is, *Mercy and Truth have met together, and Justice and Peace have kissed each other.*

Fourthly, As that was the Ark of the Covenant, so *Christ* is the Author of the New Covenant, the Peace-maker between God and Man.

Fifthly, The Ark was born upon Bars; they are the Preachers who are *Christ's* chosen Vessels, to bear his Name unto the Gentiles, *Acts 9. 15.* and thus the Ark was a Type, and not a Type only, but a visi-

ble sign of God's special Presence ; there he would be call'd upon ; there he gave Answers and Oracles to his People, and there he manifested his Glory ; for Signs have oftentimes the Names of the things whereof they are Signs ; as *Gen. 41. 5.* the seven Kine are seven Years ; especially when they are not naked Signs only, but also Seals to confirm, as Circumcision a *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, *Gen. 17. 13.* *My Covenant shall be in your Flesh ; this is the Seal of my Covenant*, and this *Baptism* is called the *Laver of Regeneration*, and the *Elements* of the Lord's Supper, *the Body and Blood of Christ* ; and yet for all this, no one was ever so stupid to believe that the Gold and Wood of the *Ark* was very God ; but that it was a special Sign and Pledge of God's efficacious Presence, as the Elements are in the Sacrament.

And this leads to the second Particular in the Text, to wit, the Influence of this Protector invoked, denoted in the Word *Arise* ; whence you may observe, that God does not always immediately vindicate and revenge the Injuries done to his Servants, but seems for a while to sleep or lie down, whilst his Enemies prevail in persecuting and afflicting his Church ; *Psal. 44. 23.* *Up Lord, why sleepest thou, awake and be not absent from us for ever ;*
whereas

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whereas in truth he does not sleep, but only waits for a convenient Season, as the Husband-man does for pruning of his Trees ; he has an appointed time for punishing the Persecutors, tho' he may for a while defer it ; and that, first for the Delinquents sake, that is, in hopes of their Conversion, *Rom. 2. 4. Knowest thou not that the long suffering and goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance ?* If Paul had been taken away when he held the Garments of them that stoned St. Stephen ; what a glorious Lamp had the Church of God wanted ? *Secondly*, God sometimes defers punishing of Tyrants and Persecutors, that by their Impenitence they might treasure up to themselves a greater measure of Wrath against the day of Wrath, *Rom. 2. 5. and that their Sins may come to a ripeness*, *Rev. 14. 15.* God expects a fulness of Iniquity, before he rouses himself up to Judgment. *Thirdly*, God oftentimes delays Punishment for the Childrens sake, that are to issue out of their Loins, as he spared wicked *Ahab* for good *Ezekiah's* sake ; for as the Law allows a condemned Woman the privilege of her Womb, so God oftentimes reprieves a Sinner for the sake of his Posterity. *Fourthly*, God oftentimes delays his Punishment for his Churches sake ; he can do good Works by Evil Instruments, and convert Poison into

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Treacle; thus he made use of *Jehu* to purge his *Temple* from the Priests of *Baal*, and he made the *Assyrians* his Rod to chastise the *Israelities*, nor was it safe the Rod should be burnt, until the Children were sufficiently corrected; and thus you see, that for the Delinquents sake, the *Childrens* sake, and the *Churches* sake, God oftentimes connives at Tyrants, and delays punishing of them; but when the ends of his Forbearance, which was their Repentance and Amendment are frustrated, and there is no appearance of their becoming better, then his Wrath grows hot, and they find, to their Cost, that his Judgments linger not, and that they shall not be able to stand before his Indignation, *nor abide the fierceness of his Anger, for that his Fury (as the Prophet speaks) shall be poured out like Fire, and the Rocks shall be thrown down before him*; for as Promise is no Payment, but rather induceth a greater Obligation, so Forbearance is no Forgiveness, but makes way for a greater Vengeance; *their Damnation slumbers not*, Peter 2. 3. for tho' God has Woollen Feet (as the *Rabbies* say) yet he has Leaden Hands, which at last will inflict heavy Punishment, with Interest for his Forbearance. Thus *the long Suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing*, 1 Pet. 3. 20. and *Isai. 65. 2. I have stretch'd*
out

out my Hands all the Day long to a *Rebellious People*. But mark what follows in the sixth Verse. *I will Recompence, into their Bosom, their Iniquities, and the Iniquity of their Fore-Fathers. God expected Fruit from the Barren Fig-Tree three Tears :* But when his Patience was tired, he gave Sentence, *Cut it down, why incumbrest it the Ground ?* God commanded the *Israelites*, when they besieged a City, to make *Overtures of Peace* before they assaulted it. And thus he himself observes the same Method ; he first advances a *White Flag of Peace and Reconciliation* ; if this prevail not, the *Red Flag of Blood*, and the *Black Flag of Desolation* follow successively.

Now for the comfortless trouble sake of the *Needy*, *I will arise*, says the Lord, and if a *Man will not turn*, he will whet his Sword, and prepare his Arrows against the *Persecutors* ; he will awake as one out of sleep, and like a *Gyant refreshed with Wine* ; he will smite his *Enemies on the hinder parts*, and wound the *Hairy Scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his Wickedness*. *Fret not thy self therefore, because of the Ungodly, neither be thou envious against the Evil Doers. Wouldest thou envy a Thief, if thou mettest him riding in a Chariot to Execution ? Or repine to see a Tyrant brave it upon a Stage, for the first or Second Act of the Trajedy ?*
Stay

Stay but till thou see the Catastrophe, and then you will conclude with *Solomon*, *That tho' a Sinner does Evil an hundred times, and God prolong his Days: Yet I know, it shall be well with them that fear the Lord.* For God will arise.

Secondly, This teaches us, that it is our Duty, when God seems to sleep and neglect the Sufferings of his Servants, to call upon him by Prayer to our Relief. *Arise, O Lord*; he watches for our Call, and expects but our earnest and ardent Prayers, to obtain what we desire, which, if they be of Faith, prove Effectual: For you see that *Moses* prevailed more with them against the *Amalekites*, than *Joshua* did with his Sword.

And let me tell you this Duty was never more necessary than now; for the Anger of the Lord is broken out against us, and seems to threaten us with as many and grievous Punishments, as are suitable to the different Nature and Qualities of our Sins and Provocations. The Weather-beaten Ship of the Church, is still tost with the raging Waves of contrary Opinions; as if *Zeno's* School were once more set wide open, who bragg'd that tho' he sometimes wanted Opinions, yet he never wanted Arguments to Defend what he Asserted.

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Those Truths which our Fathers left us confirm'd with their Pens, and sealed with their Bloods, are now question'd, and new and profitable Errors impos'd upon us for antient Truths, and the Traditions of Men made of equal Authority with the Word of God; and how should it otherwise be, seeing most of us make Religion (I dread to speak it) only subservient to the carrying on of our secular Designs, having only an *outward Form of Godliness*, but denying the Power of it; and War, which has for many Years torn and harrassed these unfortunate Kingdoms, finding no Amendment in us, begins now to threaten us again, and all things seem to conspire to our utter Ruin; and yet we, blinder than *Balaam's Ass*, will not see it; so that though we in this Kingdom enjoy the Blessings of Peace and Plenty, yet God knows how soon we shall be deprived of both. I delight not to dishearten you, or damp your Spirits with unnecessary Fears; neither will I suspect, (tho' alas there is too much reason for it) that any will be so fool hardy, as to act or attempt that, for which there has been lately (since our Intestine War) so severe a Punishment most deservedly inflicted upon many: But yet let me tell you, our obstinate and wilful Course of Sin, notwithstanding God has been

been at so much Cost to reclaim us, together with the ill Blood that is generally nourish'd amongst us; if they be not a Prognostick of our Ruin, they are an ill Symptom of our Disease, the Convulsions and Distortions of one Part from another of the Body Politick, as far as it can be distended; the burning Heats, and from thence the Raving and Disquietness of some ambitious furious Spirits amongst us, that would mingle Heaven and Earth to effect their own Designs, and regard not by what Means, right or wrong, they establish their Party; and the dastardly Dejectedness and fearful Apprehensions of others, are no very auspicious Symptoms: and tho' we had no cause to fear intestine Broils among our selves, (and God knows we have too much) yet I am sure, the warlike Preparations of all Christendom makes it now high time to awaken God by our Prayers: *Arise O Lord*, and have Mercy upon *Zion*; let thy Enemies and ours be scatter'd: and as they who had neither Garments to spread, nor Boughs to carry, cryed *Hosanna to Christ Jesus*; so they, who have neither Strength to serve, nor Means to contribute towards the just Defence of our Sovereign and his Kingdoms, nay the weakest Woman, the poorest Beggar, may yet contribute their

Pray-

Prayers; that Day thou failest of this Duty, drink his Health as often as thou wilt, thou art still his Debtor; and if it should please God that his Armies should be defeated, thou abettest his Enemies in the Conquest, in as much as thou omittest to pray for him.

But then we must be sure, before we desire God to *arise, and scatter his Enemies*; that we by a sincere Repentance, and true Amendment of our Lives, become his Friends, otherwise our Prayers will bring down Scattering and Flying upon us, instead of our Enemies; and this leads me to the third Particular in the Text, to wit, *the Object* of this Influence, his *Enemies*. First actively, because they hate God; and secondly passively, because they are hated by God; tho', to speak properly, there is neither Love nor Hatred in God, but after a Similitude; for he cannot be said to hate his own Handy-work simply, seeing all those *Συργαί*, and natural Affections of the Creatures to their own Brood, are but faint Resemblances of God's Love to his Creatures. It is the Devil's part to bring an evil Report upon the good Land, and to suggest wrong Opinions of God's Hatred to the Minds of Men; *Yea, saith he, hath God said you shall not eat?* But yet you are to take notice, that as the Scripture

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pture says, *we love him, because he loved us first*; so I may say, by inversion, he hates us, because we hated him first; that is, not as we are his Creatures, but as we are Sinners; for it is only as such that we are Objects of his Hatred: *Thou hatest the Works of the Nicholaitans, which I also hate.* Yet it is confessed that a less Degree of Love in Scripture is called Hatred, as *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* But this I touch upon only by the By.

And here since I am unawares fallen upon a Question bandied in the Schools, I shall dispatch it in a very few Words; and that is, *Whether a Man can hate God?* The proper Object of Hatred, you know, is Evil, either of Sin or of Punishment; and God being the chief Good, and therefore impossible for to fall under the Consideration of Evil, can't be the proper Object of Hatred; no, not even to the Damned, or to the Devils themselves: But in Opposition to this, we read in the 20th and 5th of *Exodus*, of the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shew Mercy unto thousands: and *John* the 15th and the 24th, they hated both me and my Father: and *Romans* the 1st and 30th, of God Haters: and *Colossians* the 1st and 21st, *You that were sometimes alienated, and Enemies.* Not

Not Aliens, but *alienated* ; to denote, that no Man is an Enemy to God in that Nature which he receiv'd from him, but by reason of his Corruption. To the Question I therefore answer, That God cannot be hated simply as he is God, and as he is Good; but as he is Just, and is Author or Actor of some Effects opposite to the corrupt Desires, or inordinate Wills of wicked Men; as in the Prohibition of Sin, or Inflicting of Punishment for Sin.

Upon this Account it was that *Job's* Wife bid him *curse God and die* ; as Friends will the same thing, but Enemies things opposite: So it is between God and the Sinner; *he that hates not Father and Mother for Christ's sake*, which does not enjoin or require an Affection of Hatred, but the Effects of Hatred: Just as a Man cuts off a gangreen'd Arm, not out of Hatred to it, but out of Love to the Body: So if our Parents be Obstructions between God and us, we must decline them rather than part with God; for it is said, *If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed*; and good Reason it should be so, seeing we are so strongly oblig'd to love him, that there is not a Creature in the World that calls not upon us for it, nor a Wound in the blessed Body of our *Saviour*
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that gapes not wide open, calling upon us to love him ; nor a line in the whole Book of God that contains not a Motive to love him ; nay, Heaven above us, the Earth beneath us, all the Members of our Bodies, and Faculties of our Souls, and the Beauty and Perfection of all the Creatures in the World, which meet in God as their Centre, invite us to love him.

As Love is the fulfilling of the Law, so Hatred is the transgressing of the Law ; and therefore Hatred against God is the very Sin against the *Holy Ghost*, which shall never be forgiven in this World, nor in that which is to come. Yet we all naturally have the Spawn of this Sin in us ; for we either wish God could not see our Sins, and that is to deny his Providence, or that he could not punish them, and that is to deny his Omnipotence, or that he would not punish, but connive at them, and that is to deny his Justice ; and therefore since we are naturally inclin'd, to this Sin, it behoves us to be more watchful and earnest in Prayer, that God would give us his renewing Grace, and establish us with his free Spirit ; for if God be our Friend, the blessed Angels are our Guardians, Conscience is our Advocate,

vocate; Men love us, all the Creatures serve us, and God strikes a League for us with the Beasts of the Field, and the very Stones of the Wall. But if God be our Enemy, the Angels are Ministers of Vengeance to us; Conscience is our Accuser, Men become our implacable Enemies, and the Creatures all conspire to take Vengeance upon us; therefore we must be sure not to be God's Enemies, which we may be three ways.

First, By being Enemies to his Word, saying, Depart from us, we will have none of the Knowledge of his ways.

Secondly, By being Enemies to David, *That is the Lord's anointed; Men of Belial, without Toke, like the Colts of wild Asses in the wilderness, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.*

Thirdly, By being Enemies to his Children. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He that touches you, touches the apple of mine eye, 2. of Zachary. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.* But I cannot insist upon these, the time calls me to the Fourth and Last Particular of my Text, that is, *The Effect of this Influence upon this Object*, in these words. *Let*
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them

them be scatter'd, let them flee before him. Scattering, as it is the way to Ruine, so it is the Effect of Power; and so also is the putting to flight: but then it must be understood, not as if God's Presence could be avoided, seeing he fills Heaven and Earth, but Θεοπεποιός so as best becomes the Majesty of God: and thus are all things that are spoken of God, by an *Antropopathy* to be taken. So the face of God is wherever he manifests his Presence, whether it be in the *Church*, or *Camp*; and thus was *Cain* a Fugitive or a Vagabond from the *Face* of the Lord, *Genesis 4th*; then to scatter, and dispossess them, *as the wind drives away the smoak*, is as much as if he should say, That as the Smoak, when it breaks out of the Chimney-top, dilates it self as if it would take possession of the whole Region of the Air, darkning the Skies, as if it meant to assault the Heavens: but with a little puff of Wind is dispers'd, and vanishes into nothing; Even so vain are the endeavours of God's Enemies, they may indeed be formidable in appearance, but in the end they only prove Smoak, that smart the Eyes for a little time, but it is in an instant dispers'd and scatter'd; for let them prepare Navies and Armadoes, God can dash them in pieces, as he did the Ships of *Jehosaphat* at *Ebion*

David's Triumphant Hymn.

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Ebion Geber. Let them fortifie themselves with Walls and Bulwarks, God can make them tremble and fall to the ground without the shot of a Cannon, as he did the Walls of *Jericho*, with the sound of Rams Horns, and the shout of an Enemy. Let them multiply Regiments of Horse and Foot, he can send such a pannick Fear amongst them, that Ten shall chase an Hundred, and an Hundred a Thousand. Let them provide wise Counsellours and Statesmen, he can infatuate the wisdom of the Wise, and turn their Counsel into Folly, as he did the Counsel of *Achitophel*. And lastly, let them make never so many Allies and Confederates, God can set *Ephraim* against *Manasses*, and *Manasses* against *Ephraim*, and both against *Judah*. And thus Navies, Armies, Counsellours, Walls and Confederates, are no more able to resist God, than a Shield of Paper is to resist the shot of a Cannon. For tho' they be powerful, he is more powerful; and if he be with us, who can be against us? *Athanasius* compared *Julian the Apostate* to a Cloud, *Cito transibit hæc nubecula*; and it was soon blown over, it was soon dispersed: and thus have I spoken what I designed upon my Text. Of which before I came to speak directly, I premised two things: *First*, That the Prophet *David*

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thought it no *dishonour* to himself, nor *slight* to the Spirit of God, to borrow a set Form of Prayer from *Moses*, as in this Text; from which particular I evinc'd not only the Fitness and Usefulness of set Forms of Prayer, but also the Necessity of them. *Secondly*, I shew'd you how far it was lawful to curse our Enemies; and told you we might not wish them even Temporal Calamities; but so far, as they conduce to their Conversion; and that with these limitations, *First*, That they are not to be reclaim'd by Mercy; *Secondly*, That it proceed from Love, and Desire of their Reformation, and not from Malice or Revenge: *Thirdly*, That it be with this Condition, if God see that it may conduce to their amendment. But withal I conclude: That it was safest, seeing we wanted the Spirits of the Prophets, to pray absolutely for their Conversion. The parts of the Text I told you were four. *First*, A Protector invocated, *God*; *Secondly*, The Influence of this Protector, *Arise*: *Thirdly*, The Object of this Influence, *Enemies*: *Fourthly*, The Effects of this Influence, *Scattering and flying*. From the first I shew'd you, that it was no new thing for the *Ark* to be called *God*; and gave you several Instances wherein it typified *Christ*, as the *Gold* and *Shittim*, whereof it was

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composed, the Crown of Gold, the Pot of *Manna*, and the Rod of *Aaron*; and then in the second place, from the Instance of this *God*; I observed, That *God* does not always instantly revenge the Injuries done to his Church, but seems for a while to connive at them: *First* for the Delinquents sake, in expectation of their amendment, or that they may by their Impenitence fill up the measure of their Iniquities: *Secondly*, For the Childrens sake, that are yet to issue out of their Loins; As he spared *Ahab* for good *Ezekiah's* sake: *Thirdly*, For his Church's sake, as in the Case of *St. Paul*: and in the second place I gained this Conclusion, That it is our Duties, when *God* seems to neglect our Sufferings, to mind him of them by our Prayers; and that we never had more need to practise this Duty than now, both in relation to Spiritual and Temporal Judgments which are already fallen, and in appearance are like to fall yet more heavily upon us: from the third particular, to wit, the *Object* of this Influence, I shew'd you that this word *Enemy*, was to be taken actively as hating *God*, and passively as hated by *God*.

Under which Head, I told you, that that to speak properly, there are neither Affections nor Passions in *God*, and that

we become Objects of his Hatred, only as we are Sinners, and not as we are his Creatures. *Secondly*, I told you, that God could not be hated simply, as he was God, but as he was Just, and the Author or Actor of some Effects that are opposite to our inordinate Desires. And that there are three ways of becoming God's Enemies: First, in being Enemies to his Word; that is, in not squaring our Lives and Actions according to it. *Secondly*, by being Enemies to his Anointed the King. And, *Thirdly*, by being Enemies to his Children. And *Fourthly* and Lastly, from the Effect of this Influence, I told you, That as Scattering was the Effect of Power, so flying from his Presence, was to be understood Θεοπεποις that is, as best becomes the Majesty of God. And that all the Endeavours of wicked Men against God or his Church, are but as Smoke dispersed with every puff of Wind: And now I shall free you from further trouble, by adding two or three words of general Application to what I have already made to each Particular as I was discoursing of them; and that the rather, because the Text seems something suitable to this Time. And truly I find myself at a loss, and know not well what to say, *for the Text.* Understand it either as a Prayer,
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or a Prophecy, or an Hymn, does at once express our Needs, as it ought our Desires; for we seem to be beset on every side with Enemies; and as so many rapid Streams or Torrents descending from the Mountains, so may we discern Discord and Dissentions, Wars, and Rumors of Wars, breaking out of every part of Christendom; and while most by their Sins, prove themselves God's Enemies, and therefore may justly expect, nay, must meet with *scattering* and *flying*. We, to our Shame and Reproach, still continue to add Sin unto Sin, and yet have the Impudence, by our expecting to be rescued from our Troubles and Sufferings, to account our selves the chief Favourites of Heaven; and by a false Assurance, assumed from thence, cheat our selves into a Belief of Dispersing and Scattering our Enemies, whilst by our daily Outrage against Heaven, we provoke God to deliver us up as a Prey into their Hands. And shall not God, think you, *Arise* and visit for these things.

Nay, this is not all; for by an illegal seeking for a licentious Liberty, it is to be feared that many of us, who would be thought the greatest Loyalists, are not only willing, but ready to become Slaves
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to Foreigners, but that which is far worse, whilst we seem zealous in our Endeavours for mending one another's Religion, we are ready to destroy Charity; which if it be not the only, is the surest Sign of the best Religion. Oh how much more Christian like, and better, and fitter were it for us to suppress this growing Flame amongst our selves, by promoting such Principles as tend to Charity and Piety, and our Mutual Temporal, as well as Spiritual Peace and Happiness, and then unanimously set our selves against all those that propagate, and maintain such Principles as tend to the utter Subversion of all Peace and true Piety, and that by an idle looking on: But first by a total forsaking of our Sins, and thereby discountenancing and exploding the Patrons of such Principles, as tend to Impiety and Sedition; that so resolving to give, for the time to come, an Universal and Impartial Obedience to God, and to the King, in all lawful Things; we may from Enemies become his Friends, and thereby engage him to espouse our Quarrels, and having done this. If we pray, *Arise, O God, let thine Enemies be scatter'd*; we need not doubt but ours shall fly, and for securing our Country, our Laws, and Religion, our
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Estates and Liberties: That I may conclude all in a Word, my humble Advice unto you is the same that St. *John's* was at *Ephesus*; when he was so old, that he was carried about in a Chair: Countrymen, love one another, for why should we contend, not about Goats Wool, or the Shadow of an Ass, but about we know not what? Why should we make our Discord as well the Ruin of our selves, as the Triumph of our Common Enemy? What can, or should we desire more for our selves than what we have, to wit, the free Exercise of our Religion Establish'd by Law; and the Enjoyment of our Liberty and Property under a King, whose profest Tenderneſs of, and repeated Promises to all his Subjects, of securing their Religion and Properties, obliges us to make all Returns of Loyalty, and Service imaginable; and to pray that God may long preserve the Author of it unto us; and resolve, by a joint Concurrence, to endeavour the continuation of it. Water (you know) if it be spilt upon the Ground, contracts it self into little Globes, for its own preservation, and shall we by falling into Fractions, make way for our Destruction? This Exhortation, one would think, is needless to Fellow-Subjects, but more to Fellow-Christians, and

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most of all to us who agree in Doctrine, and the same substance of Worship. But perhaps it betrays my Fears more than your Necessities; and therefore since we have, by our late Suffering, found by woful Experience, that the ground of all our Difference were but great Mistakes, (however magnify'd by such as design'd making up their own Fortune, by fishing in troubled Waters) like that of the two Tribes and an half about an Altar. And that a little mutual yielding on both Hands, had been a far cheaper Accommodation, and a surer way of securing us from our Common Enemy, than what has been the product of Twenty Years War. I doubt not but we shall all of us, for the future, be so wise as Unanimously to join together, first in being reconciled to God, and secondly in the just Defence of our Religion, and our Country, that so being thus United together in Piety and Love, and Interest, God himself may espouse our Quarrel, so that our *Enemies* shall be his *Enemies*, and he will scatter them, and make them flee before us.

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